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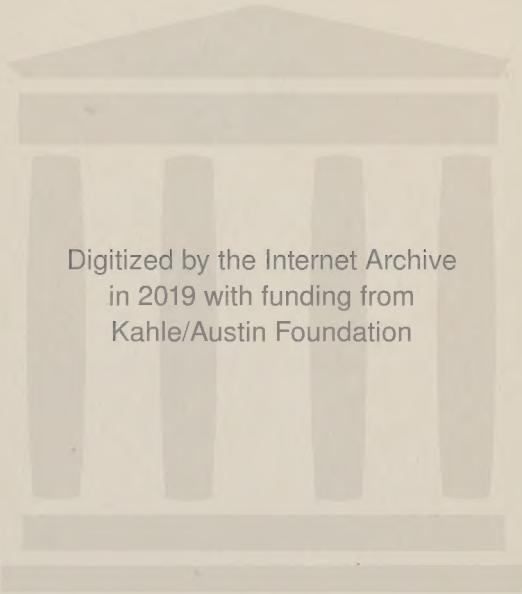


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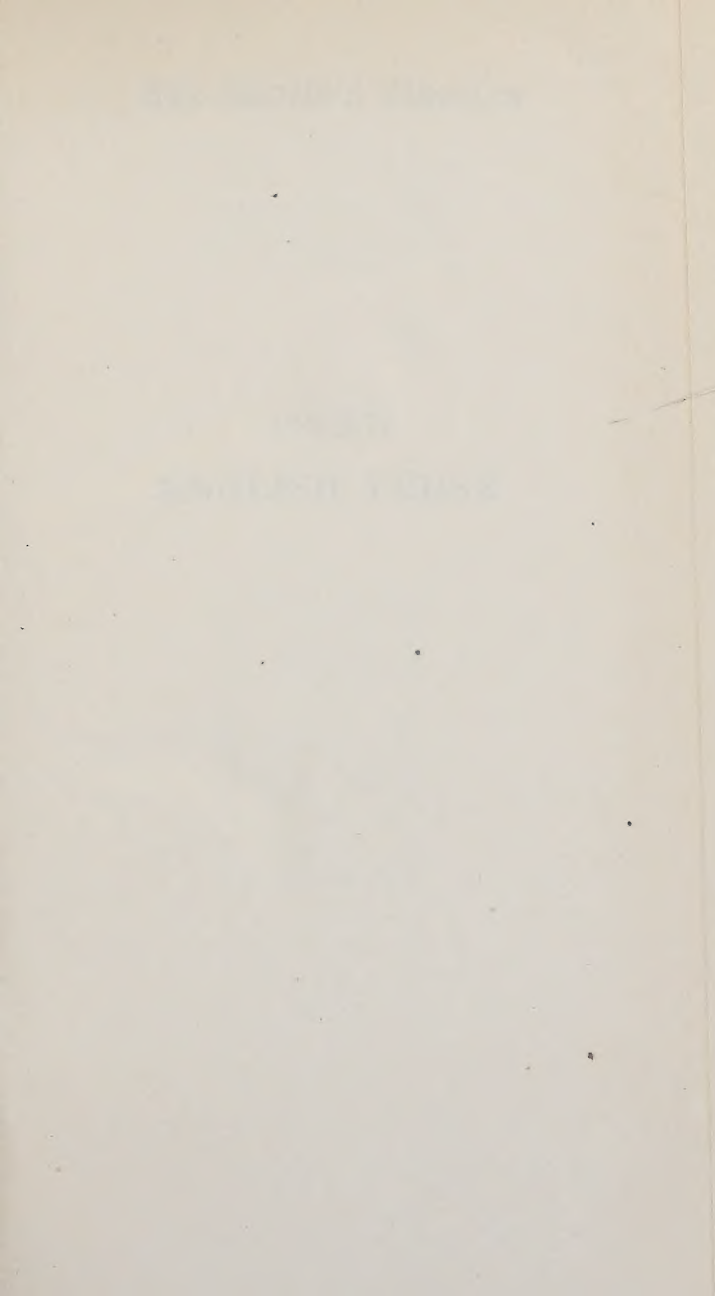
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LEIPZIG NEW YORK TORONTO

MELBOURNE CAPE TOWN BOMBAY

CALCUTTA MADRAS SHANGHAI

HUMPHREY MILFORD

PUBLISHER TO THE

UNIVERSITY

# ENGLISH VERSE

*Chosen and edited by*

W. PEACOCK

*In five volumes*

VOLUME V

LONGFELLOW

TO

RUPERT BROOKE



OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS  
LONDON : HUMPHREY MILFORD

*The fifth volume of these Selections of Verse was published  
in 1931*

30-21448

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

PR 1175. P39 v.5

## NOTE

For permission to use copyright poems in this volume thanks are due to the following: Messrs. G. Bell & Sons for C. S. Calverley's *Ballad*, and *St. Valentine's Day* by Coventry Patmore; Mrs. Bridges for *There is a Hill beside the Silver Thames*, *London Snow*, and *A Passer By*, by Robert Bridges; the Literary Executor of Rupert Brooke, Messrs. Sidgwick & Jackson, and Messrs. Dodd Mead & Co. for *Heaven* and *The Soldier*; Messrs. Constable & Co. and Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, for *Marian*, *Tardy Spring*, and *A Ballad of Past Meridian*, by George Meredith; Mrs. John Davidson and Mr. Grant Richards for *A Runnable Stag*, by John Davidson; Mrs. Dixon for *To Peace*, by R. W. Dixon; Messrs. P. J. and A. E. Dobell for *In the Train*, by James Thomson ('B.V. '); Mr. Alban Dobson for *The Ballad of Beau Brocade*, by Austin Dobson; Wm. Heinemann, Ltd. for *Chorus from Atalanta*, *Itylus*, and *Hope and Fear*, by A. C. Swinburne; the family of Gerard Manley Hopkins for *The Starlight Night*; the Houghton Mifflin Co. for *Barbara Frietchie* and *The Two Rabbins*, by J. G. Whittier; Messrs. John Lane and Messrs. Dodd Mead & Co. for *In Romney Marsh*, by John Davidson; Messrs. Macmillan for *Jenny the Mare*, by Edward Fitzgerald; Messrs. Macmillan and the Macmillan Co., New York, for *In Time of the Breaking of Nations*, and *The Casterbridge Captains*, by Thomas Hardy; Messrs. Macmillan and Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons for *England*, *My England*, and *Out of the Night*, by W. E. Henley; Messrs. Elkin Mathews & Marrot for *Collins*, by Lionel Johnson; Messrs. Methuen and Messrs. G. P. Putnam's Sons for *Theocritus*, by Oscar Wilde; Mr. Wilfrid Meynell for *The Hound of Heaven*, by Francis Thompson, and *At Night* and *Christ in the Universe*, by Alice Meynell;

Mr. Lloyd Osbourne and the Authors' Society for *Romance, Requiem, The Vagabond, and House Beautiful*, by R. L. Stevenson; Messrs. Martin Secker, Ltd., for *The Dying Patriot*, by J. E. Flecker; Mrs. Edward Thomas and Messrs. Ingpen & Grant for *The Manor Farm*, and *The Combe*, by Edward Thomas.

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# HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

1807-1882

## MY LOST YOUTH

OFTEN I think of the beautiful town  
That is seated by the sea;  
Often in thought go up and down  
The pleasant streets of that dear old town,  
And my youth comes back to me.  
And a verse of a Lapland song  
Is haunting my memory still:  
'A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees,  
And catch in sudden gleams,  
The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,  
And islands that were the Hesperides  
Of all my boyish dreams.  
And the burden of that old song,  
It murmurs and whispers still:  
'A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

I remember the black wharves and the slips,  
And the sea-tides tossing free;  
And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,  
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,  
And the magic of the sea.  
And the voice of that wayward song  
Is singing and saying still:  
'A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,  
And the fort upon the hill;  
The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar,  
The drum-beat repeated o'er and o'er,  
And the bugle wild and shrill.  
And the music of that old song  
Throbs in my memory still:  
'A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

I remember the sea-fight far away,  
How it thundered o'er the tide!  
And the dead captains, as they lay  
In their graves, o'erlooking the tranquil bay,  
Where they in battle died.  
And the sound of that mournful song  
Goes through me with a thrill:  
'A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

I can see the breezy dome of groves,  
The shadows of Deering's Woods;  
And the friendships old and the early loves  
Come back with a sabbath sound, as of doves  
In quiet neighbourhoods.  
And the verse of that sweet old song,  
It flutters and murmurs still:  
'A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart  
Across the schoolboy's brain;  
The song and the silence in the heart,  
That in part are prophecies, and in part  
Are longings wild and vain.



And the voice of that fitful song  
Sings on, and is never still:

‘A boy’s will is the wind’s will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.’

There are things of which I may not speak;  
There are dreams that cannot die;  
There are thoughts that make the strong heart weak,  
And bring a pallor into the cheek,  
And a mist before the eye.

And the words of that fatal song  
Come over me like a chill:

‘A boy’s will is the wind’s will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.’

Strange to me now are the forms I meet

When I visit the dear old town;  
But the native air is pure and sweet,  
And the trees that o’ershadow each well-known  
street,

As they balance up and down,  
Are singing the beautiful song,  
Are sighing and whispering still:

‘A boy’s will is the wind’s will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.’

And Deering’s Woods are fresh and fair,  
And with joy that is almost pain  
My heart goes back to wander there,  
And among the dreams of the days that were,  
I find my lost youth again.

And the strange and beautiful song,  
The groves are repeating it still:

‘A boy’s will is the wind’s will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.’

## THE BELFRY OF BRUGES

IN the market-place of Bruges stands the belfry  
old and brown;

Thrice consumed and thrice rebuilt, still it  
watches o'er the town.

As the summer morn was breaking, on that lofty  
tower I stood,

And the world threw off the darkness, like the  
weeds of widowhood.

Thick with towns and hamlets studded, and with  
streams and vapours grey,

Like a shield embossed with silver, round and vast  
the landscape lay.

At my feet the city slumbered. From its chimneys,  
here and there,

Wreaths of snow-white smoke ascending, vanished,  
ghost-like, into air.

Not a sound rose from the city at that early morn-  
ing hour,

But I heard a heart of iron beating in the ancient  
tower.

From their nests beneath the rafters sang the  
swallows wild and high;

And the world, beneath me sleeping, seemed more  
distant than the sky.

Then most musical and solemn, bringing back the  
olden times,

With their strange unearthly changes rang the  
melancholy chimes,

Like the psalms from some old cloister, when the  
nuns sing in the choir;  
And the great bell tolled among them, like the  
chanting of a friar.

Visions of the days departed, shadowy phantoms  
filled my brain;  
They who live in history only seemed to walk the  
earth again;

All the Foresters of Flanders,—mighty Baldwin  
Bras de Fer,  
Lyderick du Bucq and Cressy, Philip, Guy de  
Dampierre.

I beheld the pageants splendid that adorned those  
days of old;  
Stately dames, like queens attended, knights who  
bore the Fleece of Gold.

Lombard and Venetian merchants with deep-laden  
argosies;  
Ministers from twenty nations; more than royal  
pomp and ease.

I beheld proud Maximilian, kneeling humbly on the  
ground;  
I beheld the gentle Mary, hunting with her hawk  
and hound;

And her lighted bridal-chamber, where a duke slept  
with the queen,  
And the armed guard around them, and the sword  
unsheathed between.

I beheld the Flemish weavers, with Namur and  
Juliers bold,  
Marching homeward from the bloody battle of the  
Spurs of Gold;

Saw the fight at Minnewater, saw the White Hoods  
moving west,

Saw great Artevelde victorious scale the Golden  
Dragon's nest.

And again the whiskered Spaniard all the land with  
terror smote;

And again the wild alarum sounded from the  
tocsin's throat;

Till the bell of Ghent responded o'er lagoon and  
dike of sand,

'I am Roland! I am Roland! there is victory in the  
land!'

Then the sound of drums aroused me. The awakened  
city's roar

Chased the phantoms I had summoned back into  
their graves once more.

Hours had passed away like minutes; and before I  
was aware,

Lo! the shadow of the belfry crossed the sun-  
illuminated square.

#### PAUL REVERE'S RIDE

LISTEN, my children, and you shall hear  
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,  
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;  
Hardly a man is now alive  
Who remembers that famous day and year.

He said to his friend, 'If the British march  
By land or sea from the town to-night,  
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch  
Of the North Church tower as a signal light,—

One, if by land, and two, if by sea ;  
And I on the opposite shore will be,  
Ready to ride and spread the alarm  
Through every Middlesex village and farm,  
For the country folk to be up and to arm.'

Then he said, 'Good night!' and with muffled oar  
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,  
Just as the moon rose over the bay,  
Where swinging wide at her moorings lay  
The *Somerset*, British man-of-war ;  
A phantom ship, with each mast and spar  
Across the moon like a prison bar,  
And a huge black hulk, that was magnified  
By its own reflection in the tide.

Meanwhile, his friend, through alley and street,  
Wanders and watches with eager ears,  
Till in the silence around him he hears  
The muster of men at the barrack door,  
The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,  
And the measured tread of the grenadiers,  
Marching down to their boats on the shore.

Then he climbed the tower of the Old North Church,  
By the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,  
To the belfry-chamber overhead,  
And startled the pigeons from their perch  
On the sombre rafters, that round him made  
Masses and moving shapes of shade—  
By the trembling ladder, steep and tall,  
To the highest window in the wall,  
Where he paused to listen and look down  
A moment on the roofs of the town,  
And the moonlight flowing over all.

Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead,  
In their night-encampment on the hill,  
Wrapped in silence so deep and still  
That he could hear, like a sentinel's tread,  
The watchful night-wind, as it went  
Creeping along from tent to tent,  
And seeming to whisper, 'All is well!'  
A moment only he feels the spell  
Of the place and the hour, and the secret dread  
Of the lonely belfry and the dead;  
For suddenly all his thoughts are bent  
On a shadowy something far away,  
Where the river widens to meet the bay—  
A line of black that bends and floats  
On the rising tide, like a bridge of boats.

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,  
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride  
On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.  
Now he patted his horse's side,  
Now gazed at the landscape far and near,  
Then, impetuous, stamped the earth,  
And turned and tightened his saddle-girth;  
But mostly he watched with eager search  
The belfry-tower of the Old North Church,  
As it rose above the graves on the hill,  
Lonely and spectral and sombre and still.  
And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height  
A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!  
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,  
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight  
A second lamp in the belfry burns!

A hurry of hoofs in a village street,  
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,

And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark  
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet;  
That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the  
light,

The fate of a nation was riding that night;  
And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight,  
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.

He has left the village and mounted the steep,  
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,  
Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;  
And under the alders, that skirt its edge,  
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,  
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

It was twelve by the village clock  
When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.  
He heard the crowing of the cock,  
And the barking of the farmer's dog,  
And felt the damp of the river fog,  
That rises after the sun goes down.

It was one by the village clock,  
When he galloped into Lexington.  
He saw the gilded weathercock  
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,  
And the meeting-house windows, blank and bare,  
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,  
As if they already stood aghast  
At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village clock,  
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.  
He heard the bleating of the flock,  
And the twitter of birds among the trees,  
And felt the breath of the morning breeze  
Blowing over the meadows brown.



And one was safe and asleep in his bed  
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,  
Who that day would be lying dead,  
Pierced by a British musket-ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read,  
How the British Regulars fired and fled—  
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,  
From behind each fence and farm yard-wall,  
Chasing the red-coats down the lane,  
Then crossing the fields to emerge again  
Under the trees at the turn of the road,  
And only pausing to fire and load.

So through the night rode Paul Revere;  
And so through the night went his cry of alarm  
To every Middlesex village and farm—  
A cry of defiance and not of fear,  
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,  
And a word that shall echo for evermore!  
For, borne on a night-wind of the Past,  
Through all our history, to the last,  
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,  
The people will waken and listen to hear  
The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,  
And the midnight message of Paul Revere.

#### HIAWATHA AND MUDJEKEEWIS

OUT of childhood into manhood  
Now had grown my Hiawatha,  
Skilled in all the crafts of hunters,  
Learned in all the lore of old men,  
In all youthful sports and pastimes,  
In all manly arts and labours.



Swift of foot was Hiawatha ;  
He could shoot an arrow from him,  
And run forward with such fleetness,  
That the arrow fell behind him !  
Strong of arm was Hiawatha ;  
He could shoot ten arrows upward,  
Shoot them with such strength and swiftness,  
That the tenth had left the bow-string  
Ere the first to earth had fallen !

He had mittens, Minjekahwun,  
Magic mittens made of deerskin ;  
When upon his hands he wore them,  
He could smite the rocks asunder,  
He could grind them into powder.  
He had moccasins enchanted,  
Magic moccasins of deerskin ;  
When he bound them round his ankles,  
When upon his feet he tied them,  
At each stride a mile he measured !

Much he questioned old Nokomis  
Of his father Mudjekeewis ;  
Learned from her the fatal secret  
Of the beauty of his mother,  
Of the falsehood of his father ;  
And his heart was hot within him,  
Like a living coal his heart was.

Then he said to old Nokomis,  
'I will go to Mudjekeewis,  
See how fares it with my father,  
At the doorways of the West-Wind,  
At the portals of the Sunset !'

From his lodge went Hiawatha,  
Dressed for travel, armed for hunting ;  
Dressed in deerskin shirt and leggings,

Richly wrought with quills and wampum ;  
On his head his eagle-feathers,  
Round his waist his belt of wampum,  
In his hand his bow of ash-wood,  
Strung with sinews of the reindeer ;  
In his quiver oaken arrows,  
Tipped with jasper, winged with feathers ;  
With his mittens, Minjekahwun,  
With his moccasins enchanted.

Warning said the old Nokomis,  
'Go not forth, O Hiawatha !  
To the kingdom of the West-Wind,  
To the realms of Mudjekeewis,  
Lest he harm you with his magic,  
Lest he kill you with his cunning !'

But the fearless Hiawatha  
Heeded not her woman's warning ;  
Forth he strode into the forest,  
At each stride a mile he measured ;  
Lurid seemed the sky above him,  
Lurid seemed the earth beneath him,  
Hot and close the air around him,  
Filled with smoke and fiery vapours,  
As of burning woods and prairies,  
For his heart was hot within him,  
Like a living coal his heart was.

So he journeyed westward, westward,  
Left the fleetest deer behind him,  
Left the antelope and bison ;  
Crossed the rushing Esconaba,  
Crossed the mighty Mississippi,  
Passed the Mountains of the Prairie,  
Passed the land of Crows and Foxes,  
Passed the dwellings of the Blackfeet,

Came unto the Rocky Mountains,  
To the kingdom of the West-Wind,  
Where upon the gusty summits  
Sat the ancient Mudjekeewis,  
Ruler of the winds of heaven.

Filled with awe was Hiawatha  
At the aspect of his father.  
On the air about him wildly  
Tossed and streamed his cloudy tresses,  
Gleamed like drifting snow his tresses,  
Glared like Ishkoodah, the comet,  
Like the star with fiery tresses.

Filled with joy was Mudjekeewis  
When he looked on Hiawatha,  
Saw his youth rise up before him  
In the face of Hiawatha,  
Saw the beauty of Wenonah  
From the grave rise up before him.

'Welcome!' said he, 'Hiawatha,  
To the kingdom of the West-Wind!  
Long have I been waiting for you!  
Youth is lovely, age is lonely,  
Youth is fiery, age is frosty;  
You bring back the days departed,  
You bring back my youth of passion,  
And the beautiful Wenonah!'

Many days they talked together,  
Questioned, listened, waited, answered;  
Much the mighty Mudjekeewis  
Boasted of his ancient prowess,  
Of his perilous adventures,  
His indomitable courage,  
His invulnerable body.

Patiently sat Hiawatha,  
Listening to his father's boasting;  
With a smile he sat and listened,  
Uttered neither threat nor menace,  
Neither word nor look betrayed him;  
But his heart was hot within him,  
Like a living coal his heart was.

Then he said, 'O Mudjekeewis,  
Is there nothing that can harm you?  
Nothing that you are afraid of?'  
And the mighty Mudjekeewis,  
Grand and gracious in his boasting,  
Answered, saying, 'There is nothing,  
Nothing but the black rock yonder,  
Nothing but the fatal Wawbeek!'

And he looked at Hiawatha  
With a wise look and benignant,  
With a countenance paternal,  
Looked with pride upon the beauty  
Of his tall and graceful figure,  
Saying, 'O my Hiawatha!  
Is there anything can harm you?  
Anything you are afraid of?'

But the wary Hiawatha  
Paused awhile, as if uncertain,  
Held his peace, as if resolving,  
And then answered, 'There is nothing,  
Nothing but the bulrush yonder,  
Nothing but the great Apukwa!'

And as Mudjekeewis, rising,  
Stretched his hand to pluck the bulrush,  
Hiawatha cried in terror,  
Cried in well-dissembled terror,

‘Kago! kago! do not touch it!’  
‘Ah, kaween!’ said Mudjekeewis,  
‘No indeed, I will not touch it!’

Then they talked of other matters;  
First of Hiawatha’s brothers,  
First of Wabun, of the East-Wind,  
Of the South-Wind, Shawondasee,  
Of the North, Kabibonokka;  
Then of Hiawatha’s mother,  
Of the beautiful Wenonah,  
Of her birth upon the meadow,  
Of her death, as old Nokomis  
Had remembered and related.

And he cried, ‘O Mudjekeewis,  
It was you who killed Wenonah,  
Took her young life and her beauty,  
Broke the Lily of the Prairie,  
Trampled it beneath your footsteps;  
You confess it! you confess it!’  
And the mighty Mudjekeewis  
Tossed upon the wind his tresses,  
Bowed his hoary head in anguish,  
With a silent nod assented.

Then upstarted Hiawatha,  
And with threatening look and gesture  
Laid his hand upon the black rock,  
On the fatal Wawbeek laid it,  
With his mittens, Minjekahwun,  
Rent the jutting crag asunder,  
Smote and crushed it into fragments,  
Hurled them madly at his father,  
The remorseful Mudjekeewis;  
For his heart was hot within him,  
Like a living coal his heart was.

But the ruler of the West-Wind  
Blew the fragments backward from him,  
With the breathing of his nostrils,  
With the tempest of his anger,  
Blew them back at his assailant;  
Seized the bulrush, the Apukwa,  
Dragged it with its roots and fibres  
From the margin of the meadow,  
From its ooze, the giant bulrush;  
Long and loud laughed Hiawatha!

Then began the deadly conflict,  
Hand to hand among the mountains;  
From his eyrie screamed the eagle,  
The Keneu, the great war-eagle;  
Sat upon the crags around them,  
Wheeling flapped his wings above them.

Like a tall tree in the tempest  
Bent and lashed the giant bulrush;  
And in masses huge and heavy  
Crashing fell the fatal Wawbeek;  
Till the earth shook with the tumult  
And confusion of the battle,  
And the air was full of shoutings,  
And the thunder of the mountains,  
Starting, answered, 'Baim-wawa!'

Back retreated Mudjekeewis,  
Rushing westward o'er the mountains,  
Stumbling westward down the mountains,  
Three whole days retreated fighting,  
Still pursued by Hiawatha  
To the doorways of the West-Wind,  
To the portals of the Sunset,  
To the earth's remotest border,  
Where into the empty spaces

Sinks the sun, as a flamingo  
Drops into her nest at nightfall,  
In the melancholy marshes.

‘Hold!’ at length cried Mudjekeewis,  
‘Hold, my son, my Hiawatha!  
’Tis impossible to kill me,  
For you cannot kill the immortal.  
I have put you to this trial,  
But to know and prove your courage;  
Now receive the prize of valour!

‘Go back to your home and people,  
Live among them, toil among them,  
Cleanse the earth from all that harms it,  
Clear the fishing-grounds and rivers,  
Slay all monsters and magicians,  
All the Wendigoes, the giants,  
All the serpents, the Kenabeeks,  
As I slew the Mishe-Mokwa,  
Slew the Great Bear of the mountains.

‘And at last when Death draws near you,  
When the awful eyes of Pauguk  
Glare upon you in the darkness,  
I will share my kingdom with you;  
Ruler shall you be thenceforward  
Of the Northwest-Wind, Keewaydin,  
Of the home-wind, the Keewaydin.’

Thus was fought that famous battle  
In the dreadful days of Shah-shah,  
In the days long since departed,  
In the kingdom of the West-Wind.  
Still the hunter sees its traces  
Scattered far o’er hill and valley;  
Sees the giant bulrush growing  
By the ponds and water-courses,



Sees the masses of the Wawbeek  
Lying still in every valley.

Homeward now went Hiawatha;  
Pleasant was the landscape round him,  
Pleasant was the air above him,  
For the bitterness of anger  
Had departed wholly from him,  
From his brain the thought of vengeance,  
From his heart the burning fever.

Only once his pace he slackened,  
Only once he paused or halted,  
Paused to purchase heads of arrows  
Of the ancient Arrow-maker,  
In the land of the Dacotahs,  
Where the Falls of Minnehaha  
Flash and gleam among the oak-trees,  
Laugh and leap into the valley.

There the ancient Arrow-maker  
Made his arrow-heads of sandstone,  
Arrow-heads of chalcedony,  
Arrow-heads of flint and jasper,  
Smoothed and sharpened at the edges,  
Hard and polished, keen and costly.

With him dwelt his dark-eyed daughter,  
Wayward as the Minnehaha,  
With her moods of shade and sunshine,  
Eyes that smiled and frowned alternate,  
Feet as rapid as the river,  
Tresses flowing like the water,  
And as musical a laughter;  
And he named her from the river,  
From the waterfall he named her,  
Minnehaha, Laughing Water.

Was it then for heads of arrows,



Arrow-heads of chalcedony,  
Arrow-heads of flint and jasper,  
That my Hiawatha halted  
In the land of the Dacotahs?

Was it not to see the maiden,  
See the face of Laughing Water  
Peeping from behind the curtain,  
Hear the rustling of her garments  
From behind the waving curtain,  
As one sees the Minnehaha  
Gleaming, glancing through the branches,  
As one hears the Laughing Water  
From behind its screen of branches?

Who shall say what thoughts and visions  
Fill the fiery brains of young men?  
Who shall say what dreams of beauty  
Filled the heart of Hiawatha?  
All he told to old Nokomis,  
When he reached the lodge at sunset,  
Was the meeting with his father,  
Was his fight with Mudjekeewis;  
Not a word he said of arrows,  
Not a word of Laughing Water.

## THE SPANISH JEW'S TALE

### THE LEGEND OF RABBI BEN LEVI

RABBI Ben Levi, on the Sabbath, read  
A volume of the Law, in which it said,  
'No man shall look upon my face and live.'  
And as he read, he prayed that God would give  
His faithful servant grace with mortal eye  
To look upon his face and yet not die.

Then fell a sudden shadow on the page,  
And, lifting up his eyes, grown dim with age,  
He saw the Angel of Death before him stand,  
Holding a naked sword in his right hand.

Rabbi Ben Levi was a righteous man,  
Yet through his veins a chill of terror ran.  
With trembling voice he said, 'What wilt thou  
here?'

The Angel answered, 'Lo! the time draws near  
When thou must die; yet first, by God's decree,  
Whate'er thou askest shall be granted thee.'

Replied the Rabbi, 'Let these living eyes  
First look upon my place in Paradise.'

Then said the Angel, 'Come with me and look.'  
Rabbi Ben Levi closed the sacred book,  
And rising, and uplifting his grey head,  
'Give me thy sword,' he to the Angel said,  
'Lest thou shouldst fall upon me by the way.'  
The Angel smiled and hastened to obey,  
Then led him forth to the Celestial Town,  
And set him on the wall, whence, gazing down,  
Rabbi Ben Levi, with his living eyes,  
Might look upon his place in Paradise.

Then straight into the city of the Lord  
The Rabbi leaped with the Death-Angel's sword,  
And through the streets there swept a sudden  
breath

Of something there unknown, which men call death.  
Meanwhile the Angel stayed without, and cried,  
'Come back!' To which the Rabbi's voice replied,  
'No! in the name of God, whom I adore,  
I swear that hence I will depart no more!'

Then all the Angels cried, 'O Holy One,  
See what the son of Levi here hath done!  
The kingdom of Heaven he takes by violence,  
And in Thy name refuses to go hence!'  
The Lord replied, 'My Angels, be not wroth;  
Did e'er the son of Levi break his oath?  
Let him remain; for he with mortal eye  
Shall look upon my face and yet not die.'

Beyond the outer wall the Angel of Death  
Heard the great voice, and said, with panting breath,  
'Give back the sword, and let me go my way.'  
Whereat the Rabbi paused, and answered, 'Nay!  
Anguish enough already hath it caused  
Among the sons of men.' And while he paused  
He heard the awful mandate of the Lord  
Resounding through the air, 'Give back the sword!'  
The Rabbi bowed his head in silent prayer;  
Then said he to the dreadful Angel, 'Swear,  
No human eye shall look on it again;  
But when thou takest away the souls of men,  
Thyself unseen, and with an unseen sword,  
Thou wilt perform the bidding of the Lord.'  
The Angel took the sword again, and swore,  
And walks on earth unseen for evermore.

#### VICTOR GALBRAITH

UNDER the walls of Monterey  
At daybreak the bugles began to play,  
Victor Galbraith!  
In the mist of the morning damp and grey,  
These were the words they seemed to say:  
'Come forth to thy death,  
Victor Galbraith!'

Forth he came, with a martial tread;  
Firm was his step, erect his head;

Victor Galbraith,  
He who so well the bugle played,  
Could not mistake the words it said:  
‘Come forth to thy death,  
Victor Galbraith!’

He looked at the earth, he looked at the sky,  
He looked at the files of musketry,  
Victor Galbraith!

And he said, with a steady voice and eye,  
‘Take good aim; I am ready to die!’  
Thus challenges death  
Victor Galbraith.

Twelve fiery tongues flashed straight and red,  
Six leaden balls on their errand sped;  
Victor Galbraith

Falls to the ground, but he is not dead;  
His name was not stamped on those balls of lead,  
And they only scathe  
Victor Galbraith.

Three balls are in his breast and brain,  
But he rises out of the dust again,  
Victor Galbraith!

The water he drinks has a bloody stain;  
‘O kill me, and put me out of my pain!’  
In his agony prayeth  
Victor Galbraith.

Forth dart once more those tongues of flame,  
And the bugler has died a death of shame,  
Victor Galbraith!

His soul has gone back to whence it came,  
And no one answers to the name,  
    When the Sergeant saith,  
    ‘Victor Galbraith!’

Under the walls of Monterey  
By night a bugle is heard to play,  
    Victor Galbraith!  
Through the mist of the valley damp and grey  
The sentinels hear the sound, and say,  
    ‘That is the wraith  
    Of Victor Galbraith!’

## THE COUNTESS OF DUFFERIN

1807–1867

### THE IRISH EMIGRANT

I’m sitting on the stile, Mary,  
    Where we sat, side by side,  
That bright May morning long ago  
    When first you were my bride.  
The corn was springing fresh and green,  
    And the lark sang loud and high,  
The red was on your lip, Mary,  
    The love-light in your eye.

The place is little changed, Mary,  
    The day is bright as then,  
The lark’s loud song is in my ear,  
    The corn is green again;  
But I miss the soft clasp of your hand,  
    Your breath warm on my cheek,  
And I still keep list’ning for the words  
    You never more may speak.

'Tis but a step down yonder lane,  
The little Church stands near—  
The Church where we were wed, Mary—  
I see the spire from here ;  
But the graveyard lies between, Mary—  
My step might break your rest—  
Where you, my darling, lie asleep  
With your baby on your breast.

I'm very lonely now, Mary—  
The poor make no new friends—  
But, oh, they love the better still  
The few our Father sends.  
And you were all I had, Mary,  
My blessing and my pride ;  
There's nothing left to care for now,  
Since my poor Mary died.

Yours was the good brave heart, Mary,  
That still kept hoping on,  
When trust in God had left my soul,  
And half my strength was gone.  
There was comfort ever on your lip,  
And the kind look on your brow.  
I bless you, Mary, for that same,  
Though you can't hear me now.

I thank you for the patient smile  
When your heart was fit to break ;  
When the hunger pain was gnawing there  
You hid it for my sake !  
I bless you for the pleasant word,  
When your heart was sad and sore.  
Oh ! I'm thankful you are gone, Mary,  
Where grief can't reach you more !

I'm bidding you a long farewell,  
My Mary—kind and true!  
But I'll not forget you, darling,  
In the land I'm going to.  
They say there's bread and work for all,  
And the sun shines always there;  
But I'll not forget old Ireland,  
Were it fifty times as fair!

And when amid those grand old woods  
I sit and shut my eyes,  
My heart will travel back again  
To where my Mary lies;  
I'll think I see the little stile  
Where we sat, side by side,  
And the springing corn and bright May morn,  
When first you were my bride.

## JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

1807-1892

## BARBARA FRIETCHIE

UP from the meadows rich with corn,  
Clear in the cool September morn,  
The clustered spires of Frederick stand  
Green-walled by the hills of Maryland.  
Round about them orchards sweep,  
Apple and peach tree fruited deep,  
Fair as the garden of the Lord  
To the eyes of the famished rebel horde,  
On that pleasant morn of the early fall  
When Lee marched over the mountain-wall;

Over the mountains winding down,  
Horse and foot, into Frederick town.

Forty flags with their silver stars,  
Forty flags with their crimson bars,

Flapped in the morning wind: the sun  
Of noon looked down, and saw not one.

Up rose old Barbara Frietchie then,  
Bowed with her fourscore years and ten;

Bravest of all in Frederick town,  
She took up the flag the men hauled down;

In her attic window the staff she set,  
To show that one heart was loyal yet.

Up the street came the rebel tread,  
Stonewall Jackson riding ahead.

Under his slouched hat left and right  
He glanced; the old flag met his sight.

‘Halt!’—the dust-brown ranks stood fast.  
‘Fire!’—out blazed the rifle-blast.

It shivered the window, pane and sash;  
It rent the banner with seam and gash.

Quick, as it fell from the broken staff  
Dame Barbara snatched the silken scarf.

She leaned far out on the window-sill,  
And shook it forth with a royal will.

‘Shoot, if you must, this old grey head,  
But spare your country’s flag,’ she said.

A shade of sadness, a blush of shame,  
Over the face of the leader came;



The nobler nature within him stirred  
To life at that woman's deed and word ;

'Who touches a hair of yon grey head  
Dies like a dog! March on!' he said.

All day long through Frederick street  
Sounded the tread of marching feet:

All day long that free flag tost  
Over the heads of the rebel host.

Ever its torn folds rose and fell  
On the loyal winds that loved it well ;

And through the hill-gaps sunset light  
Shone over it with a warm good-night.

Barbara Frietchie's work is o'er,  
And the Rebel rides on his raids no more.

Honour to her! and let a tear  
Fall, for her sake, on Stonewall's bier.

Over Barbara Frietchie's grave,  
Flag of Freedom and Union, wave!

Peace and order and beauty draw  
Round thy symbol of light and law ;

And ever the stars above look down  
On thy stars below in Frederick town!

#### THE TWO RABBINS

THE Rabbi Nathan twoscore years and ten  
Walked blameless through the evil world, and then,  
Just as the almond blossomed in his hair,  
Met a temptation all too strong to bear,  
And miserably sinned. So, adding not  
Falsehood to guilt, he left his seat, and taught

No more among the elders, but went out  
From the great congregation girt about  
With sackcloth, and with ashes on his head,  
Making his grey locks greyer. Long he prayed.  
Smiting his breast; then, as the Book he laid  
Open before him for the Bath-Col's choice,  
Pausing to hear that Daughter of a Voice,  
Behold the royal preacher's words: 'A friend  
Loveth at all times, yea, unto the end;  
And for the evil day thy brother lives.'  
Marvelling, he said: 'It is the Lord who gives  
Counsel in need. At Ecbatana dwells  
Rabbi Ben Isaac, who all men excels  
In righteousness and wisdom, as the trees  
Of Lebanon the small weeds that the bees  
Bow with their weight. I will arise and lay  
My sins before him.'

And he went his way  
Barefooted, fasting long, with many prayers;  
But even as one who, followed unawares,  
Suddenly in the darkness feels a hand  
Thrill with its touch his own, and his cheek fanned  
By odours subtly sweet, and whispers near  
Of words he loathes, yet cannot choose but hear,  
So, while the Rabbi journeyed, chanting low  
The wail of David's penitential woe,  
Before him still the old temptation came,  
And mocked him with the motion and the shame  
Of such desires that, shuddering, he abhorred  
Himself; and, crying mightily to the Lord  
To free his soul and cast the demon out,  
Smote with his staff the blackness round about.

At length, in the low light of a spent day,

The towers of Ecbatana far away  
Rose on the desert's rim; and Nathan, faint  
And footsore, pausing where for some dead saint  
The faith of Islam reared a domèd tomb,  
Saw some one kneeling in the shadow, whom  
He greeted kindly: 'May the Holy One  
Answer thy prayers, O stranger!' Whereupon  
The shape stood up with a loud cry, and then  
Clasped in each other's arms, the two grey men  
Wept, praising Him whose gracious providence  
Made their paths one. But straightway as the sense  
Of his transgression smote him, Nathan tore  
Himself away: 'O friend beloved, no more  
Worthy am I to touch thee, for I came,  
Foul from my sins, to tell thee all my shame.  
Haply thy prayers, since naught availeth mine,  
May purge my soul, and make it white like thine.  
Pity me, O Ben Isaac, I have sinned!'

Awestruck Ben Isaac stood. The desert wind  
Blew his long mantle backward, laying bare  
The mournful secret of his shirt of hair.  
'I too, O friend, if not in act,' he said,  
'In thought have verily sinned. Hast thou not  
read,  
"Better the eye should see than that desire  
Should wander?" Burning with a hidden fire  
That tears and prayers quench not, I come to thee  
For pity and for help, as thou to me.  
Pray for me, O my friend!' But Nathan cried,  
'Pray thou for me, Ben Isaac!'

Side by side

In the low sunshine by the turban stone  
They knelt; each made his brother's woe his own,

Forgetting, in the agony and stress  
Of pitying love, his claim of selfishness;  
Peace, for his friend besought, his own became;  
His prayers were answered in another's name;  
And, when at last they rose up to embrace,  
Each saw God's pardon in his brother's face!

Long after, when his headstone gathered moss,  
Traced on the targum-marge of Onkelos  
In Rabbi Nathan's hand these words were read:  
*'Hope not the cure of sin till Self is dead;  
Forget it in love's service, and the debt  
Thou canst not pay the angels shall forget;  
Heaven's gate is shut to him who comes alone;  
Save thou a soul, and it shall save thy own!'*

## CAROLINE ELIZABETH SARAH NORTON

1808-1877

### I DO NOT LOVE THEE

I do not love thee!—no, I do not love thee!  
And yet when thou art absent I am sad;  
And envy even the bright blue sky above thee,  
Whose quiet stars may see thee and be glad.

I do not love thee!—yet, I know not why,  
Whate'er thou dost seems still well done, to me:  
And often in my solitude I sigh  
That those I do love are not more like thee!

I do not love thee!—yet, when thou art gone,  
I hate the sound (though those who speak be dear)  
Which breaks the lingering echo of the tone  
Thy voice of music leaves upon my ear.

I do not love thee!—yet thy speaking eyes,  
 With their deep, bright, and most expressive blue,  
 Between me and the midnight heaven arise,  
 Oftener than any eyes I ever knew.

I know I do not love thee! yet, alas!  
 Others will scarcely trust my candid heart;  
 And oft I catch them smiling as they pass,  
 Because they see me gazing where thou art.

## EDGAR ALLAN POE

1809–1849

## TO HELEN

HELEN, thy beauty is to me  
 Like those Nicean barks of yore  
 That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,  
 The weary, way-worn wanderer bore  
 To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,  
 Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,  
 Thy Naiad airs have brought me home  
 To the glory that was Greece  
 And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche  
 How statue-like I see thee stand,  
 The agate lamp within thy hand!  
 Ah; Psyche, from the regions which  
 Are Holy Land!

## THE RAVEN

ONCE upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered,  
weak and weary,  
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,  
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there  
came a tapping,  
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my  
chamber door.  
"Tis some visitor," I muttered, 'tapping at my  
chamber door—  
Only this, and nothing more.'  
Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak  
December,  
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost  
upon the floor.  
Eagerly I wished the morrow—vainly I had  
sought to borrow  
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for  
the lost Lenore—  
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels  
name Lenore—  
Nameless here for evermore.  
And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each  
purple curtain  
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never  
felt before;  
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I  
stood repeating,  
"Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my  
chamber door—  
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my cham-  
ber door;—  
This it is, and nothing more.'

Presently my soul grew stronger ; hesitating then  
no longer,  
'Sir,' said I, 'or Madam, truly your forgiveness I  
implore ;

But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you  
came rapping,  
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my  
chamber door,  
That I scarce was sure I heard you'—here I opened  
wide the door—

Darkness there, and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood  
there wondering, fearing,  
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals ever dared  
to dream before ;

But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness  
gave no token,  
And the only word there spoken was the whis-  
pered word, 'Lenore!'  
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back  
the word, 'Lenore!'—

Merely this, and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within  
me burning,  
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than  
before.

'Surely,' said I, 'surely that is something at my  
window lattice: .

Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery  
explore—

Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery  
explore;—

'Tis the wind and nothing more.'



Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many  
a flirt and flutter,  
In there stepped a stately raven of the saintly days  
of yore;  
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute  
stopped or stayed he;  
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my  
chamber door—  
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my cham-  
ber door—  
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into  
smiling,  
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance  
it wore.  
‘Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou,’ I  
said, ‘art sure no craven,  
Ghastly grim and ancient raven wandering from  
the Nightly shore—  
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night’s  
Plutonian shore!’  
Quoth the Raven, ‘Nevermore.’

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear  
discourse so plainly,  
Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy  
bore;  
For we cannot help agreeing that no living  
human being  
Ever yet was blest with seeing bird above his  
chamber door—  
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his  
chamber door,  
With such name as ‘Nevermore’.



But the raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust,  
spoke only  
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he  
did outpour.

Nothing further then he uttered—not a feather  
then he fluttered—

Till I scarcely more than muttered, ‘Other  
friends have flown before—

On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my hopes have  
flown before.’

Then the bird said, ‘Nevermore.’

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so  
aptly spoken,

‘Doubtless,’ said I, ‘what it utters is its only stock  
and store,

Caught from some unhappy master whom un-  
merciful Disaster

Followed fast and followed faster till his songs  
one burden bore—

Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden  
bore

Of “Never—nevermore”.’

But the Raven still beguiling all my fancy into  
smiling,

Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird,  
and bust, and door;

Then upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself  
to linking

Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous  
bird of yore—

What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and omi-  
nous bird of yore

Meant in croaking ‘Nevermore’.

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing

To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core;

This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining

On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamplight gloated o'er,

But whose velvet violet lining with the lamplight gloating o'er,

*She* shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then methought the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer

Swung by Seraphim whose footsteps tinkled on the tufted floor.

'Wretch,' I cried, 'thy God hath lent thee—by these angels he hath sent thee

Respite—respite and nepenthe, from thy memories of Lenore!

Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore!'

Quoth the Raven, 'Nevermore.'

'Prophet!' said I, 'thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!—

Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,

Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—

On this home by horror haunted—tell me truly, I implore—

Is there—is there balm in Gilead?—tell me—tell me, I implore!'

Quoth the Raven, 'Nevermore.'

‘Prophet!’ said I, ‘thing of evil—prophet still, if  
bird or devil!

By that Heaven that bends above us—by that God  
we both adore—

Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the dis-  
tant Aidenn,

It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels  
name Lenore—

Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels  
name Lenore.’

Quoth the Raven, ‘Nevermore.’

‘Be that word our sign in parting, bird or fiend,’  
I shrieked, upstarting—

‘Get thee back into the tempest and the Night’s  
Plutonian shore!

Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy  
soul hath spoken!

Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust  
above my door!

Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy  
form from off my door!’

Quoth the Raven, ‘Nevermore.’

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still  
is sitting

On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber  
door;

And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon’s  
that is dreaming,

And the lamplight o’er him streaming throws his  
shadow on the floor;

And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating  
on the floor

Shall be lifted—nevermore!

## ANNABEL LEE

It was many and many a year ago,  
In a kingdom by the sea,  
That a maiden there lived whom you may know  
By the name of Annabel Lee.  
And this maiden lived with no other thought  
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and she was a child  
In this kingdom by the sea:  
But we loved with a love that was more than love—  
I and my Annabel Lee,  
With a love that the wingèd seraphs of heaven  
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,  
In this kingdom by the sea,  
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling  
My beautiful Annabel Lee,  
So that her high-born kinsmen came  
And bore her away from me,  
To shut her up in a sepulchre  
In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,  
Went envying her and me—  
Yes! that was the reason (as all men know,  
In this kingdom by the sea)  
That the wind came out of the cloud one night,  
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love  
Of those who were older than we—  
Of many far wiser than we—

And neither the angels in heaven above,  
Nor the demons down under the sea,  
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul  
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.

For the moon never beams without bringing me  
dreams  
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;  
And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes  
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;  
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side  
Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,  
In the sepulchre there by the sea,  
In her tomb by the sounding sea.

### THE HAUNTED PALACE

IN the greenest of our valleys  
By good angels tenanted,  
Once a fair and stately palace—  
Radiant palace—reared its head.  
In the monarch Thought's dominion—  
It stood there!  
Never seraph spread a pinion  
Over fabric half so fair!

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,  
On its roof did float and flow  
(This—all this—was in the olden  
Time long ago),  
And every gentle air that dallied,  
In that sweet day,  
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,  
A wingèd odour went away.

Wanderers in that happy valley,  
Through two luminous windows, saw  
Spirits moving musically,  
To a lute's well-tuned law,  
Round about a throne where, sitting  
(Porphyrogene!)  
In state his glory well-befitting,  
The ruler of the realm was seen.

And all with pearl and ruby glowing  
Was the fair palace door,  
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing,  
And sparkling evermore,  
A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty  
Was but to sing,  
In voices of surpassing beauty,  
The wit and wisdom of their king.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,  
Assailed the monarch's high estate.  
(Ah, let us mourn!—for never morrow  
Shall dawn upon him desolate!)  
And round about his home the glory  
That blushed and bloomed,  
Is but a dim remembered story  
Of the old time entombed.

And travellers, now, within that valley,  
Through the red-litten windows see  
Vast forms, that move fantastically  
To a discordant melody,  
While, like a ghastly rapid river,  
Through the pale door  
A hideous throng rush out for ever  
And laugh—but smile no more.

## FOR ANNIE

THANK Heaven! the crisis—  
The danger is past,  
And the lingering illness  
Is over at last—  
And the fever called 'Living'  
Is conquered at last.

Sadly, I know  
I am shorn of my strength,  
And no muscle I move  
As I lie at full length—  
But no matter!—I feel  
I am better at length.

And I rest so composedly  
Now, in my bed,  
That any beholder  
Might fancy me dead—  
Might start at beholding me,  
Thinking me dead.

The moaning and groaning,  
The sighing and sobbing,  
Are quieted now,  
With that horrible throbbing  
At heart:—ah, that horrible,  
Horrible throbbing!

The sickness—the nausea—  
The pitiless pain—  
Have ceased, with the fever  
That maddened my brain—  
With the fever called 'Living'  
That burned in my brain.

And O! of all tortures  
    *That* torture the worst  
Has abated—the terrible  
    Torture of thirst  
For the naphthaline river  
    Of Passion accurst:—  
I have drunk of a water  
    That quenches all thirst:—

—Of a water that flows,  
    With a lullaby sound,  
From a spring but a very few  
    Feet under ground—  
From a cavern not very far  
    Down under ground.

And ah! let it never  
    Be foolishly said  
That my room is gloomy,  
    And narrow my bed;  
For man never slept  
    In a different bed—  
And, *to sleep*, you must slumber  
    In just such a bed.

My tantalized spirit  
    Here blandly reposes,  
Forgetting, or never  
    Regretting its roses—  
Its old agitations  
    Of myrtles and roses:

For now, while so quietly  
    Lying, it fancies  
A holier odour  
    About it, of pansies—



A rosemary odour,  
Commingled with pansies—  
With rue and the beautiful  
Puritan pansies.

And so it lies happily,  
Bathing in many  
A dream of the truth  
And the beauty of Annie—  
Drowned in a bath  
Of the tresses of Annie.

She tenderly kissed me,  
She fondly caressed,  
And then I fell gently  
To sleep on her breast—  
Deeply to sleep  
From the heaven of her breast.

When the light was extinguished  
She covered me warm,  
And she prayed to the angels  
To keep me from harm—  
To the queen of the angels  
To shield me from harm.

And I lie so composedly,  
Now, in my bed,  
(Knowing her love)  
That you fancy me dead—  
And I rest so contentedly,  
Now, in my bed,  
(With her love at my breast)  
That you fancy me dead—  
That you shudder to look at me,  
Thinking me dead;—

But my heart it is brighter  
Than all of the many  
Stars in the sky,  
For it sparkles with Annie—  
It glows with the light  
Of the love of my Annie—  
With the thought of the light  
Of the eyes of my Annie.

## EDWARD FITZGERALD

1809–1883

## THE BALLAD OF JENNY THE MARE

## I

I'LL sing you a Song, and a merry, merry Song,  
Concerning our Yorkshire Jen;  
Who never yet ran with Horse or Mare,  
That ever she cared for a pin.

## II

When first she came to Newmarket town,  
The Sportsmen all viewed her around;  
All the cry was, 'Alas, poor wench,  
Thou never can run this ground!'

## III

When they came to the starting-post,  
The Mare looked very smart;  
And let them all say what they will,  
She never lost her start.

## IV

When they got to the Two-mile post,  
Poor Jenny was cast behind:  
She was cast behind, she was cast behind,  
All for to take her wind.

## V

When they got to the Three-mile post,  
*The Mare looked very pale—*

SHE LAID DOWN HER EARS ON HER BONNY NECK,  
AND BY THEM ALL DID SHE SAIL;

## VI

*(Accelerando.)*

‘Come follow me, come follow me,  
All you that run so neat;  
And ere that you catch me again,  
I’ll make you well to sweat.’

## VII

*(Grandioso.)*

When she got to the Winning-post,  
The people all gave a shout:  
And Jenny clicked up her Lily-white foot,  
And jumped like any Buck.

## VIII

The Jockey said to her, ‘This race you have run,  
This race for me you have got;  
You could gallop it all over again,  
When the rest could hardly trot!’

*Euphranor, 1882.*

## OLD SONG

’Tis a dull sight  
To see the year dying,  
When winter winds  
Set the yellow wood sighing:  
Sighing, O sighing!  
When such a time cometh  
I do retire  
Into an old room  
Beside a bright fire:  
O, pile a bright fire!

And there I sit  
Reading old things,  
Of knights and lorn damsels,  
While the wind sings—  
O, drearily sings!

I never look out  
Nor attend to the blast;  
For all to be seen  
Is the leaves falling fast:  
Falling, falling!

But close at the hearth,  
Like a cricket, sit I,  
Reading of summer  
And chivalry—  
Gallant chivalry!

Then with an old friend  
I talk of our youth—  
How 'twas gladsome, but often  
Foolish, forsooth:  
But gladsome, gladsome!

Or, to get merry,  
We sing some old rhyme  
That made the wood ring again  
In summer time—  
Sweet summer time!

Then we go smoking,  
Silent and snug:  
Naught passes between us,  
Save a brown jug—  
Sometimes!

And sometimes a tear  
Will rise in each eye,  
Seeing the two old friends  
So merrily—  
So merrily!

And ere to bed  
Go we, go we,  
Down on the ashes  
We kneel on the knee,  
Praying together!

Thus, then, live I  
Till, 'mid all the gloom,  
By Heaven! the bold sun  
Is with me in the room  
Shining, shining!

Then the clouds part,  
Swallows soaring between;  
The spring is alive,  
And the meadows are green!

I jump up like mad,  
Break the old pipe in twain,  
And away to the meadows,  
The meadows again!

RUBÁIYÁT OF OMAR KHAYYÁM OF  
NAISHÁPÚR

I

AWAKE! for Morning in the Bowl of Night  
Has flung the Stone that puts the Stars to Flight:  
And Lo! the Hunter of the East has caught  
The Sultan's Turret in a Noose of Light.

## II

Dreaming when Dawn's Left Hand was in the Sky  
 I heard a Voice within the Tavern cry,  
 'Awake, my Little ones, and fill the Cup  
 Before Life's Liquor in its Cup be dry.'

## III

And, as the Cock crew, those who stood before  
 The Tavern shouted—'Open then the Door!  
 You know how little while we have to stay,  
 And, once departed, may return no more.'

## IV

Now the New Year reviving old Desires,  
 The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires,  
 Where the WHITE HAND OF MOSES on the Bough  
 Puts out, and Jesus from the ground suspires.

## V

Irám indeed is gone with all its Rose,  
 And Jamshýd's Sev'n-ringed Cup where no one  
 knows;  
 But still the Vine her ancient Ruby yields,  
 And still a Garden by the Water blows.

## VI

And David's Lips are lock't; but in divine  
 High-piping Péhleví, with 'Wine! Wine! Wine!  
*Red Wine!*'—the Nightingale cries to the Rose  
 That yellow Cheek of hers to incarnadine.

## VII

Come, fill the Cup, and in the Fire of Spring  
 The Winter Garment of Repentance fling:  
 The Bird of Time has but a little way  
 To fly—and Lo! the Bird is on the Wing.

## VIII

And look—a thousand Blossoms with the Day  
Woke—and a thousand scattered into Clay:

And this first Summer Month that brings the  
Rose  
Shall take Jamshýd and Kaikobád away.

## IX

But come with old Khayyám, and leave the Lot  
Of Kaikobád and Kaikhosrú forgot:

Let Rustum lay about him as he will,  
Or Hátim Tai cry Supper—heed them not.

## X

With me along some Strip of Herbage strown,  
That just divides the desert from the sown,

Where name of Slave and Sultán scarce is known,  
And pity Sultán Máhmúd on his Throne.

## XI

Here with a Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough,  
A Flask of Wine, a book of Verse—and Thou

Beside me singing in the Wilderness—  
And Wilderness is Paradise enow.

## XII

‘How sweet is mortal Sovranty!’—think some:  
Others—‘How blest the Paradise to come!’

Ah, take the Cash in hand and waive the Rest;  
Oh, the brave Music of a *distant* Drum!

## XIII

Look to the Rose that blows about us—‘Lo,  
Laughing,’ she says, ‘into the World I blow:

At once the silken Tassel of my Purse  
Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw.’

## XIV

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon  
Turns Ashes—or it prospers; and anon,  
Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face  
Lighting a little Hour or two—is gone.

## XV

And those who husbanded the Golden Grain,  
And those who flung it to the Winds like Rain,  
Alike to no such aureate Earth are turn'd  
As, buried once, Men want dug up again.

## XVI

Think, in this battered Caravanserai  
Whose Doorways are alternate Night and Day,  
How Sultán after Sultán with his Pomp  
Abode his Hour or two, and went his way.

## XVII

They say the Lion and the Lizard keep  
The Courts where Jamshýd gloried and drank deep:  
And Bahráw, that great Hunter—the Wild Ass  
Stamps o'er his Head, and he lies fast asleep.

## XVIII

I sometimes think that never blows so red  
The Rose as where some buried Caesar bled;  
That every Hyacinth the Garden wears  
Dropt in its Lap from some once lovely Head.

## XIX

And this delightful Herb whose tender Green  
Fledges the River's Lip on which we lean—  
Ah, lean upon it lightly! for who knows  
From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen!



## XX

Ah, my Belovèd, fill the Cup that clears  
To-DAY of past Regrets and future Fears—  
*To-morrow?*—Why, To-morrow I may be  
Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n Thousand Years.

## XXI

Lo! some we loved, the loveliest and best  
That Time and Fate of all their Vintage prest,  
Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before  
And one by one crept silently to Rest.

## XXII

And we, that now make merry in the Room  
They left, and Summer dresses in new Bloom,  
Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of Earth  
Descend, ourselves to make a Couch—for whom?

## XXIII

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,  
Before we too into the Dust descend;  
Dust into Dust, and under Dust, to lie,  
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and—sans End!

## XXIV

Alike for those who for To-DAY prepare,  
And those that after a To-MORROW stare,  
A Muezzín from the Tower of Darkness cries,  
'Fools! your Reward is neither Here nor There!'

## XXV

Why, all the Saints and Sages who discussed  
Of the Two Worlds so learnedly, are thrust  
Like foolish Prophets forth; their Words to Scorn  
Are scattered and their Mouths are stopt with Dust.

## XXVI

Oh, come with old Khayyám, and leave the Wise  
To talk; one thing is certain, that Life flies;  
One thing is certain, and the Rest is Lies;  
The Flower that once has blown for ever dies.

## XXVII

Myself when young did eagerly frequent  
Doctor and Saint, and heard great Argument  
About it and about: but evermore  
Came out by the same Door as in I went.

## XXVIII

With them the Seed of Wisdom did I sow,  
And with my own hand laboured it to grow:  
And this was all the Harvest that I reaped—  
'I came like Water, and like Wind I go.'

## XXIX

Into this Universe, and *why* not knowing,  
Nor *whence*, like Water willy-nilly flowing:  
And out of it, as Wind along the Waste,  
I know not *whither*, willy-nilly blowing.

## XXX

What, without asking, hither hurried *whence*?  
And, without asking, *whither* hurried hence!  
Another and another Cup to drown  
The Memory of this Impertinence!

## XXXI

Up from Earth's Centre, through the Seventh Gate  
I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sate,  
And many Knots unravelled by the Road;  
But not the Knot of Human Death and Fate.

## XXXII

There was a Door to which I found no Key:  
There was a Veil past which I could not see:  
Some little Talk awhile of ME and THEE  
There seemed—and then no more of THEE and ME.

## XXXIII

Then to the rolling Heaven itself I cried,  
Asking, 'What Lamp had Destiny to guide  
'Her little Children stumbling in the Dark?'  
And—'A blind Understanding!' Heaven replied.

## XXXIV

Then to this earthen Bowl did I adjourn  
My Lip the secret Well of Life to learn:  
And Lip to Lip it murmured—'While you live  
Drink!—for once dead you never shall return.'

## XXXV

I think the Vessel, that with fugitive  
Articulation answered, once did live,  
And merry-make; and the cold Lip I kissed,  
How many Kisses might it take—and give!

## XXXVI

For in the Market-place, one Dusk of Day,  
I watched the Potter thumping his wet Clay:  
And with its all obliterated Tongue  
It murmured—'Gently, Brother, gently, pray!'

## XXXVII

Ah, fill the Cup:—what boots it to repeat  
How Time is slipping underneath our Feet:  
Unborn TO-MORROW and dead YESTERDAY,  
Why fret about them if TO-DAY be sweet!

## XXXVIII

One Moment in Annihilation's Waste,  
One Moment, of the Well of Life to taste—

The Stars are setting and the Caravan  
Starts for the Dawn of Nothing—Oh, make haste!

## XXXIX

How long, how long, in infinite Pursuit  
Of This and That endeavour and dispute?

Better be merry with the fruitful Grape  
Than sadden after none, or bitter, Fruit.

## XL

You know, my Friends, how long since in my House  
For a new Marriage I did make Carouse:

Divorced old barren Reason from my Bed,  
And took the Daughter of the Vine to Spouse.

## XLI

For 'Is' and 'Is-NOT' though *with* Rule and Line,  
And 'UP-AND-DOWN' *without*, I could define,

I yet, in all I only cared to know,  
Was never deep in anything but—Wine.

## XLII

And lately, by the Tavern Door agape,  
Came stealing through the Dusk an Angel Shape

Bearing a Vessel on his Shoulder; and  
He bid me taste of it; and 'twas—the Grape.

## XLIII

The Grape that can with Logic absolute  
The Two-and-Seventy jarring Sects confute:

The subtle Alchemist that in a Trice  
Life's leaden Metal into Gold transmute.

## XLIV

The mighty Máhmúd, the victorious Lord,  
That all the misbelieving and black Horde  
Of Fears and Sorrows that infest the Soul  
Scatters and slays with his enchanted Sword.

## XLV

But leave the Wise to wrangle, and with me  
The Quarrel of the Universe let be:  
And, in some corner of the Hubbub coucht,  
Make Game of that which makes as much of Thee.

## XLVI

For in and out, above, about, below,  
'Tis nothing but a Magic Shadow-show,  
Played in a Box whose Candle is the Sun,  
Round which we Phantom Figures come and go.

## XLVII

And if the Wine you drink, the Lip you press,  
End in the Nothing all Things end in—Yes—  
Then fancy while Thou art, Thou art but what  
Thou shalt be—Nothing—Thou shalt not be less.

## XLVIII

While the Rose blows along the River Brink,  
With old Khayyám the Ruby Vintage drink:  
And when the Angel with his darker Draught  
Draws up to Thee—take that, and do not shrink.

## XLIX

'Tis all a Chequer-board of Nights and Days  
Where Destiny with Men for Pieces plays:  
Hither and thither moves, and mates, and slays,  
And one by one back in the Closet lays.

## L

The Ball no Question makes of Ayes and Noes,  
But Right or Left as strikes the Player goes:

And He that tossed Thee down into the Field,  
*He* knows about it all—*HE* knows—*HE* knows!

## LI

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,  
Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit

Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,  
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it.

## LII

And that inverted Bowl we call The Sky,  
Whereunder crawling coop't we live and die,

Lift not thy hands to *It* for help—for *It*  
Rolls impotently on as Thou or I.

## LIII

With Earth's first Clay They did the Last Man's  
knead,

And then of the Last Harvest sowed the Seed:

Yea, the first Morning of Creation wrote  
What the Last Dawn of Reckoning shall read.

## LIV

I tell Thee this—When, starting from the Goal,  
Over the shoulders of the flaming Foal

Of Heaven Parwín and Mushtara they flung,  
In my predestined Plot of Dust and Soul

## LV

The Vine had struck a Fibre; which about  
If clings my Being—let the Súfi flout;

Of my Base Metal may be filed a Key,  
That shall unlock the Door he howls without.

## LVI

And this I know: whether the one True Light  
Kindle to Love, or Wrath-consume me quite,  
One glimpse of It within the Tavern caught  
Better than in the Temple lost outright.

## LVII

Oh, Thou, who didst with Pitfall and with Gin  
Beset the Road I was to wander in,  
Thou wilt not with Predestination round  
Enmesh me, and impute my Fall to Sin?

## LVIII

Oh, Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make,  
And who with Eden didst devise the Snake;  
For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man  
Is blackened, Man's Forgiveness give—and take!

. . . . .

## KÚZA-NÁMA

## LIX

Listen again. One evening at the Close  
Of Ramazán, ere the better Moon arose,  
In that old Potter's Shop I stood alone  
With the clay Population round in Rows.

## LX

And, strange to tell, among that Earthen Lot  
Some could articulate, while others not:  
And suddenly one more impatient cried—  
'Who is the Potter, pray, and who the Pot?'

## LXI

Then said another—'Surely not in vain  
My Substance from the common Earth was ta'en,  
That He who subtly wrought me into Shape  
Should stamp me back to common Earth again.'

## LXII

Another said—‘Why, ne’er a peevish Boy,  
Would break the Bowl from which he drank in  
Joy;

Shall He that *made* the Vessel in pure Love  
And Fancy, in an after Rage destroy!’

## LXIII

None answered this; but after Silence spake  
A Vessel of a more ungainly Make:

‘They sneer at me for leaning all awry;  
What! did the Hand then of the Potter shake?’

## LXIV

Said one—‘Folks of a surly Tapster tell,  
And daub his Visage with the Smoke of Hell;  
They talk of some strict Testing of us—Pish!  
He’s a Good Fellow, and ’twill all be well.’

## LXV

Then said another with a long-drawn Sigh,  
‘My Clay with long oblivion is gone dry:

But, fill me with the old familiar Juice,  
Methinks I might recover by and by!’

## LXVI

So while the Vessels one by one were speaking,  
One spied the little Crescent all were seeking:

And then they jogged each other, ‘Brother,  
Brother!

Hark to the Porter’s Shoulder-knot a-creaking!’  
.  
.  
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## LXVII

Ah, with the Grape my fading Life provide,  
And wash my Body whence the Life has died,  
And in a Winding-sheet of Vine-leaf wrapt,  
So bury me by some sweet Garden-side.



## LXVIII

That even my buried Ashes such a Snare  
Of Perfume shall fling up into the Air,  
As not a True Believer passing by  
But shall be overtaken unaware.

## LXIX

Indeed the Idols I have loved so long  
Have done my Credit in Men's Eye much wrong:  
Have drowned my Honour in a shallow Cup,  
And sold my Reputation for a Song.

## LXX

Indeed, indeed, Repentance oft before  
I swore—but was I sober when I swore?  
And then and then came Spring, and Rose-in-  
hand  
My thread-bare Penitence apieces tore.

## LXXI

And much as Wine has played the Infidel,  
And robbed me of my Robe of Honour—well,  
I often wonder what the Vintners buy  
One-half so precious as the Goods they sell.

## LXXII

Alas, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!  
That Youth's sweet-scented Manuscript should  
close!  
The Nightingale that in the Branches sang,  
Ah, whence, and whither flown again, who knows!

## LXXIII

Ah, Love! could thou and I with Fate conspire  
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,  
Would not we shatter it to bits—and then  
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!

## LXXIV

Ah, Moon of my Delight who knowest no wane,  
The Moon of Heaven is rising once again:

How oft hereafter rising shall she look  
Through this same Garden after me—in vain!

## LXXV

And when Thyself with shining Foot shall pass  
Among the Guests Star-scattered on the Grass,  
And in thy joyous Errand reach the Spot  
Where I made one—turn down an empty Glass!

TAMAM SHUD.

## LORD HOUGHTON

1809–1885

## THE MEN OF OLD

I KNOW not that the men of old  
Were better than men now,  
Of heart more kind, of hand more bold,  
Of more ingenuous brow:  
I heed not those who pine for force  
A ghost of Time to raise,  
As if they thus could check the course  
Of these appointed days.

Still it is true, and over true,  
That I delight to close  
This book of life self-wise and new,  
And let my thoughts repose  
On all that humble happiness,  
The world has since forgone,—  
The daylight of contentedness  
That on those faces shone!

With rights, tho' not too closely scanned,  
    Enjoyed, as far as known,—  
With will by no reverse unmanned,—  
    With pulse of even tone,—  
They from to-day and from to-night  
    Expected nothing more,  
Than yesterday or yesternight  
    Had proffered them before.

To them was life a simple art  
    Of duties to be done,  
A game where each man took his part,  
    A race where all must run:  
A battle whose great scheme and scope  
    They little cared to know,  
Content, as men at arms, to cope  
    Each with his fronting foe.

Man *now* his Virtue's diadem  
    Puts on and proudly wears,  
Great thoughts, great feelings, came to them,  
    Like instincts, unawares:  
Blending their souls' sublimest needs  
    With tasks of every day,  
They went about their gravest deeds,  
    As noble boys at play.—

And what if Nature's fearful wound  
    They did not probe and bare,  
For that their spirits never swooned  
    To watch the misery there,—  
For that their love but flowed more fast,  
    Their charities more free,  
Not conscious what mere drops they cast  
    Into the evil sea.

A man's best things are nearest him,  
Lie close about his feet,  
It is the distant and the dim  
That we are sick to greet:  
For flowers that grow our hands beneath  
We struggle and aspire,—  
Our hearts must die, except they breathe  
The air of fresh Desire.  
Yet, Brothers, who up Reason's hill  
Advance with hopeful cheer,—  
O! loiter not, those heights are chill,  
As chill as they are clear;  
And still restrain your haughty gaze,  
The loftier that ye go,  
Remembering distance leaves a haze  
On all that lies below.

#### THE PALM-TREE AND THE PINE

BENEATH an Indian palm a girl  
Of other blood reposes,  
Her cheek is clear and pale as pearl,  
Amid that wild of roses.  
Beside a northern pine a boy  
Is leaning fancy-bound,  
Nor listens where the noisy joy  
Awaits the impatient hound.  
Cool grows the sick and feverish calm,—  
Relaxed the frosty twine,—  
The pine-tree dreameth of the palm,  
The palm-tree of the pine.  
As soon shall nature interlace  
Those dimly-visioned boughs,  
As these young lovers face to face  
Renew their early vows!

## ALFRED TENNYSON

1809–1892

## MARIANA

‘Mariana in the moated grange.’—*Measure for Measure*.

WITH blackest moss the flower-plots  
Were thickly crusted, one and all:  
The rusted nails fell from the knots  
That held the pear to the gable-wall.  
The broken sheds looked sad and strange:  
Unlifted was the clinking latch;  
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch  
Upon the lonely moated grange.  
She only said, ‘My life is dreary,  
He cometh not,’ she said;  
She said, ‘I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead!’

Her tears fell with the dews at even;  
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried;  
She could not look on the sweet heaven,  
Either at morn or eventide.  
After the flitting of the bats,  
When thickest dark did trance the sky,  
She drew her casement-curtain by,  
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.  
She only said, ‘The night is dreary,  
He cometh not,’ she said;  
She said, ‘I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead!’

Upon the middle of the night,  
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow:  
The cock sung out an hour ere light:  
From the dark fen the oxen’s low

Came to her: without hope of change,  
In sleep she seemed to walk forlorn,  
Till cold winds woke the grey-eyed morn  
About the lonely moated grange.

She only said, 'The day is dreary,  
He cometh not,' she said;  
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead!'

About a stone-cast from the wall  
A sluice with blackened waters slept,  
And o'er it many, round and small,  
The clustered marish-mosses crept.  
Hard by a poplar shook alway,  
All silver-green with gnarled bark:  
For leagues no other tree did mark  
The level waste, the rounding grey.

She only said, 'My life is dreary,  
He cometh not,' she said;  
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead!'

And ever when the moon was low,  
And the shrill winds were up and away,  
In the white curtain, to and fro,  
She saw the gusty shadow sway.  
But when the moon was very low,  
And wild winds bound within their cell,  
The shadow of the poplar fell  
Upon her bed, across her brow.

She only said, 'The night is dreary,  
He cometh not,' she said;  
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead!'

All day within the dreamy house,  
The doors upon their hinges creaked ;  
The blue fly sung in the pane ; the mouse  
Behind the mouldering wainscot shrieked,  
Or from the crevice peered about.  
Old faces glimmered thro' the doors,  
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,  
Old voices called her from without.  
She only said, 'My life is dreary,  
He cometh not,' she said ;  
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead !'

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,  
The slow clock ticking, and the sound  
Which to the wooing wind aloof  
The poplar made, did all confound  
Her sense ; but most she loathed the hour  
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay  
Athwart the chambers, and the day  
Was sloping toward his western bower.  
Then, said she, 'I am very dreary,  
He will not come,' she said ;  
She wept, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
Oh God, that I were dead !'

## RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free  
In the silken sail of infancy,  
The tide of time flowed back with me,  
The forward-flowing tide of time ;  
And many a sheeny summer-morn,  
Adown the Tigris I was borne,

By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,  
High-walled gardens green and old;  
True Mussulman was I and sworn,  
    For it was in the golden prime  
    Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Anight my shallop, rustling thro'  
The low and bloomèd foliage, drove  
The fragrant, glistening deeps, and clove  
The citron-shadows in the blue:  
By garden porches on the brim,  
The costly doors flung open wide,  
Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,  
And broidered sofas on each side:  
    In sooth it was a goodly time,  
    For it was in the golden prime  
    Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often, where clear-stemmed platans guard  
The outlet, did I turn away  
The boat-head down a broad canal  
From the main river sluiced, where all  
The sloping of the moon-lit sward  
Was damask-work, and deep inlay  
Of braided blooms unmown, which crept  
Adown to where the water slept.  
    A goodly place, a goodly time,  
    For it was in the golden prime  
    Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won  
Ridged the smooth level, bearing on  
My shallop thro' the star-strown calm,  
Until another night in night  
I entered, from the clearer light,  
Imbowered vaults of pillared palm,



Imprisoning sweets, which, as they clomb  
Heavenward, were stayed beneath the dome  
Of hollow boughs.—A goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward; and the clear canal  
Is rounded to as clear a lake.  
From the green rivage many a fall  
Of diamond rillets musical,  
Thro' little crystal arches low.  
Down from the central fountain's flow  
Fall'n silver-chiming, seemed to shake  
The sparkling flints beneath the prow.  
A goodly place, a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Above thro' many a bowery turn  
A walk with vary-coloured shells  
Wandered engrained. On either side  
All round about the fragrant marge  
From fluted vase, and brazen urn  
In order, eastern flowers large,  
Some dropping low their crimson bells  
Half-closed, and others studded wide  
With disks and tiars, fed the time  
With odour in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon-grove  
In closest coverture upsprung,  
The living airs of middle night  
Died round the bulbul as he sung; ,  
Not he: but something which possessed  
The darkness of the world, delight,

Life, anguish, death, immortal love,  
Ceasing not, mingled, unrepressed,  
    Apart from place, withholding time,  
    But flattering the golden prime  
    Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the garden-bowers and grots  
Slumbered: the solemn palms were ranged  
Above, unwooded of summer wind:  
A sudden splendour from behind  
Flushed all the leaves with rich gold-green,  
And, flowing rapidly between  
Their interspaces, counterchanged  
The level lake with diamond-plots  
    Of dark and bright. A lovely time,  
    For it was in the golden prime  
    Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,  
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,  
Grew darker from that under-flame:  
So, leaping lightly from the boat,  
With silver anchor left afloat,  
In marvel whence that glory came  
Upon me, as in sleep I sank  
In cool soft turf upon the bank,  
    Entrancèd with that place and time,  
    So worthy of the golden prime  
    Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was drawn—  
A realm of pleasance, many a mound,  
And many a shadow-chequered lawn  
Full of the city's stilly sound,  
And deep myrrh-thickets blowing round  
The stately cedar, tamarisks,

Thick rosaries of scented thorn,  
Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks  
    Graven with emblems of the time,  
    In honour of the golden prime  
    Of good Haroun Alraschid.

With dazèd vision unawares  
From the long alley's latticed shade  
Emerged, I came upon the great  
Pavilion of the Caliphat.  
Right to the carven cedarn doors,  
Flung inward over spangled floors,  
Broad-based flights of marble stairs  
Ran up with golden balustrade,  
    After the fashion of the time,  
    And humour of the golden prime  
    Of good Haroun Alraschid.

The fourscore windows all alight  
As with the quintessence of flame,  
A million tapers flaring bright  
From twisted silvers looked to shame  
The hollow-vaulted dark, and streamed  
Upon the moonèd domes aloof  
In inmost Bagdat, till there seemed  
Hundreds of crescents on the roof  
    Of night new-risen, that marvellous time,  
    To celebrate the golden prime,  
    Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Then stole I up, and trancedly  
Gazed on the Persian girl alone,  
Serene with argent-lidded eyes  
Amorous, and lashes like to rays  
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl  
Tressed with redolent ebony,

In many a dark delicious curl,  
Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone;  
The sweetest lady of the time,  
Well worthy of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,  
Pure silver, underpropt a rich  
Throne of the massive ore, from which  
Down-drooped, in many a floating fold,  
Engarlanded and diapered  
With inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold.  
Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirred  
With merriment of kingly pride,  
Sole star of all that place and time,  
I saw him—in his golden prime,  
THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID!

## THE LADY OF SHALOTT

### PART I

ON either side the river lie  
Long fields of barley and of rye,  
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;  
And thro' the field the road runs by  
To many-towered Camelot;  
And up and down the people go,  
Gazing where the lilies blow  
Round an island there below,  
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,  
Little breezes dusk and shiver  
Thro' the wave that runs for ever  
By the island in the river  
Flowing down to Camelot.

Four grey walls, and four grey towers,  
Overlook a space of flowers,  
And the silent isle imbowers

The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veiled,  
Slide the heavy barges trailed  
By slow horses; and unhailed  
The shallop flitteth silken-sailed

Skimming down to Camelot:

But who hath seen her wave her hand?  
Or at the casement seen her stand?  
Or is she known in all the land,

The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early  
In among the bearded barley,  
Hear a song that echoes cheerly  
From the river winding clearly,

Down to towered Camelot:

And by the moon the reaper weary,  
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,  
Listening, whispers 'Tis the fairy

Lady of Shalott.'

## PART II

THERE she weaves by night and day  
A magic web with colours gay.  
She has heard a whisper say,  
A curse is on her if she stay

To look down to Camelot.

She knows not what the curse may be,  
And so she weaveth steadily,  
And little other care hath she,

The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear  
That hangs before her all the year,  
Shadows of the world appear.

There she sees the highway near

Winding down to Camelot:

There the river eddy whirls,  
And there the surly village-churls,  
And the red cloaks of market girls,

Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,  
An abbot on an ambling pad,  
Sometimes a curly shepherd lad,  
Or long-haired page in crimson clad,

Goes by to towered Camelot;

And sometimes thro' the mirror blue  
The knights come riding two and two:  
She hath no loyal knight and true,

The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights  
To weave the mirror's magic sights,  
For often thro' the silent nights  
A funeral, with plumes and lights,

And music, went to Camelot:

Or when the moon was overhead,  
Came two young lovers lately wed:  
'I am half sick of shadows,' said

The Lady of Shalott.

### PART III

A BOW-SHOT from her bower-eaves,  
He rode between the barley-sheaves,  
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,  
And flamed upon the brazen greaves  
Of bold Sir Lancelot.

A red-cross knight for ever kneeled  
To a lady in his shield,  
That sparkled on the yellow field,  
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glittered free,  
Like to some branch of stars we see  
Hung in the golden Galaxy.  
The bridle bells rang merrily  
As he rode down to Camelot:  
And from his blazoned baldric slung  
A mighty silver bugle hung,  
And as he rode his armour rung,  
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather  
Thick-jewelled shone the saddle-leather,  
The helmet and the helmet-feather  
Burned like one burning flame together,  
As he rode down to Camelot.  
As often thro' the purple night,  
Below the starry clusters bright,  
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,  
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed;  
On burnished hooves his war-horse trode;  
From underneath his helmet flowed  
His coal-black curls as on he rode,  
As he rode down to Camelot.  
From the bank and from the river  
He flashed into the crystal mirror,  
'Tirra lirra,' by the river  
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,  
She made three paces thro' the room,  
She saw the water-lily bloom,  
She saw the helmet and the plume,  
                    She looked down to Camelot.  
Out flew the web and floated wide;  
The mirror cracked from side to side;  
'The curse is come upon me,' cried  
                    The Lady of Shalott.

## PART IV

IN the stormy east-wind straining,  
The pale yellow woods were waning,  
The broad stream in his banks complaining,  
Heavily the low sky raining

                    Over towered Camelot;  
Down she came and found a boat  
Beneath a willow left afloat,  
And round about the prow she wrote  
                    *The Lady of Shalott.*

And down the river's dim expanse—  
Like some bold seër in a trance,  
Seeing all his own mischance—  
With a glassy countenance  
                    Did she look to Camelot.

And at the closing of the day  
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;  
The broad stream bore her far away,  
                    The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white  
That loosely flew to left and right—  
The leaves upon her falling light—  
Thro' the noises of the night  
                    She floated down to Camelot:



And as the boat-head wound along  
The willowy hills and fields among,  
They heard her singing her last song,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,  
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,  
Till her blood was frozen slowly,  
And her eyes were darkened wholly,  
Turned to towered Camelot.  
For ere she reached upon the tide  
The first house by the water-side,  
Singing in her song she died,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,  
By garden wall and gallery,  
A gleaming shape she floated by,  
Dead-pale between the houses high,  
Silent into Camelot.  
Out upon the wharfs they came,  
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,  
And round the prow they read her name,  
*The Lady of Shalott.*

Who is this? and what is here?  
And in the lighted palace near  
Died the sound of royal cheer;  
And they crossed themselves for fear,  
All the knights at Camelot:  
But Lancelot mused a little space;  
He said, 'She has a lovely face;  
God in his mercy lend her grace,  
The Lady of Shalott.'

## THE LOTOS-EATERS

'COURAGE!' he said, and pointed toward the land,  
'This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon.'

In the afternoon they came unto a land

In which it seemèd always afternoon.

All round the coast the languid air did swoon,

Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.

Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;

And like a downward smoke, the slender stream

Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,

Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;

And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,

Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.

They saw the gleaming river seaward flow

From the inner land: far off, three mountain-tops,

Three silent pinnacles of agèd snow,

Stood sunset flushed: and, dewed with showery  
drops,

Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmèd sunset lingered low adown

In the red West: thro' mountain clefts the dale

Was seen far inland, and the yellow down

Bordered with palm, and many a winding vale

And meadow, set with slender galingale;

A land where all things always seemed the same!

And round about the keel with faces pale,

Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,

The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,

Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave

To each, but whoso did receive of them,

And taste, to him the gushing of the wave

Far far away did seem to mourn and rave  
On alien shores ; and if his fellow spake,  
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave ;  
And deep-asleep he seemed, yet all awake,  
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,  
Between the sun and moon upon the shore ;  
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,  
Of child, and wife, and slave ; but evermore  
Most weary seemed the sea, weary the oar,  
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.  
Then some one said, ' We will return no more ' ;  
And all at once they sang, ' Our island home  
Is far beyond the wave ; we will no longer roam.'

## CHORIC SONG

## I

There is sweet music here that softer falls  
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,  
Or night-dews on still waters between walls  
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass ;  
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,  
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes ;  
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful  
skies.

Here are cool mosses deep,  
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,  
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,  
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

## II

Why are we weighed upon with heaviness,  
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,  
While all things else have rest from weariness ?

All things have rest: why should we toil alone,  
We only toil, who are the first of things,  
And make perpetual moan,  
Still from one sorrow to another thrown:  
Nor ever fold our wings,  
And cease from wanderings,  
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;  
Nor hearken what the inner spirit sings,  
'There is no joy but calm!'  
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

## III

Lo! in the middle of the wood,  
The folded leaf is wooed from out the bud  
With winds upon the branch, and there  
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,  
Sun-steeped at noon, and in the moon  
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow  
Falls, and floats adown the air.  
Lo! sweetened with the summer light,  
The full-juiced apple, waxing over mellow,  
Drops in the silent autumn night.  
All its allotted length of days,  
The flower ripens in its place,  
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,  
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

## IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,  
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.  
Death is the end of life; ah, why  
Should life all labour be?  
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,  
And in a little while our lips are dumb.  
Let us alone. What is it that will last?

All things are taken from us, and become  
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.  
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have  
To war with evil? Is there any peace  
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?  
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave  
In silence; ripen, fall and cease:  
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful  
ease.

## V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,  
With half-shut eyes ever to seem  
Falling asleep in a half-dream!  
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,  
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;  
To hear each other's whispered speech;  
Eating the Lotos day by day,  
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,  
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;  
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly  
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;  
To muse and brood and live again in memory,  
With those old faces of our infancy  
Heaped over with a mound of grass,  
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

## VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,  
And dear the last embraces of our wives  
And their warm tears: but all hath suffered change;  
For surely now our household hearths are cold:  
Our sons inherit us: our looks are strange:  
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.  
Or else the island princes over-bold

Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings  
Before them of the ten-years' war in Troy,  
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.  
Is there confusion in the little isle?  
Let what is broken so remain.  
The Gods are hard to reconcile:  
'Tis hard to settle order once again.  
There *is* confusion worse than death,  
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,  
Long labour unto aged breath,  
Sore task to hearts worn out with many wars  
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

## VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,  
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)  
With half-dropt eyelids still,  
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,  
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly  
His waters from the purple hill—  
To hear the dewy echoes calling  
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twinèd vine—  
To watch the emerald-coloured water falling  
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine!  
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,  
Only to hear were sweet, stretched out beneath the  
pine.

## VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak:  
The Lotos blows by every winding creek:  
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone:  
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone  
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-  
dust is blown.

We have had enough of action, and of motion we.  
Rolled to starboard, rolled to larboard, when the  
surge was seething free,  
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-  
fountains in the sea.  
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,  
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined  
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.  
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are  
hurled  
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are  
lightly curled  
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleam-  
ing world:  
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted  
lands,  
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring  
deeps and fiery sands,  
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking  
ships, and praying hands.  
But they smile, they find a music centred in a  
doleful song  
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of  
wrong,  
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong;  
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave  
the soil,  
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring  
toil,  
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil;  
Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis whis-  
pered—down in hell  
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys  
dwell,



Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.  
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the  
    shore  
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave  
    and oar;  
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander  
    more.

### A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their shade,  
    '*The Legend of Good Women*,' long ago  
Sung by the morning star of song, who made  
    His music heard below;  
Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath  
    Preluded those melodious bursts that fill  
The spacious times of great Elizabeth  
    With sounds that echo still.  
And, for a while, the knowledge of his art  
    Held me above the subject, as strong gales  
Hold swollen clouds from raining, tho' my heart,  
    Brimful of those wild tales,  
Charged both mine eyes with tears. In every land  
    I saw, wherever light illumineth,  
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand  
    The downward slope to death.  
Those far-renowned brides of ancient song  
    Peopled the hollow dark, like burning stars,  
And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong,  
    And trumpets blown for wars;  
And clattering flints battered with clanging hoofs:  
    And I saw crowds in columned sanctuaries;  
And forms that passed at windows and on roofs  
    Of marble palaces;



Corpses across the threshold ; heroes tall  
Dislodging pinnacle and parapet  
Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall ;  
Lances in ambush set ;

And high shrine-doors burst thro' with heated  
blasts

That run before the fluttering tongues of fire ;  
White surf wind-scattered over sails and masts,  
And ever climbing higher ;

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen plates,  
Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers woes,  
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron grates,  
And hushed seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as, when to land  
Bluster the winds and tides the self-same way,  
Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,  
Torn from the fringe of spray.

I started once, or seemed to start in pain,  
Resolved on noble things, and strove to speak,  
As when a great thought strikes along the brain,  
And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew down  
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,  
That bore a lady from a leaguered town ;  
And then, I know not how,

All those sharp fancies, by down-lapsing thought  
Streamed onward, lost their edges, and did  
creep

Rolled on each other, rounded, smoothed, and  
brought  
Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wandered far  
In an old wood: fresh-washed in coolest dew,  
The maiden splendours of the morning star  
Shook in the steadfast blue.

Enormous elm-tree-boles did stoop and lean  
Upon the dusty brushwood underneath  
Their broad curved branches, fledged with clearest  
green,  
New from its silken sheath.

The dim red morn had died, her journey done,  
And with dead lips smiled at the twilight plain,  
Half-fall'n across the threshold of the sun,  
Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb dead air,  
Not any song of bird or sound of rill;  
Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre  
Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of jasmine turned  
Their humid arms festooning tree to tree,  
And at the root thro' lush green grasses burn'd  
The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I knew  
The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn  
On those long, rank, dark wood-walks drenched in  
dew,  
Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,  
Poured back into my empty soul and frame  
The times when I remember to have been  
Joyful and free from blame.

And from within me a clear under-tone  
Thrilled thro' mine ears in that unblissful clime,  
'Pass freely thro': the wood is all thine own,  
Until the end of time.'

At length I saw a lady within call,  
Stilller than chiselled marble, standing there;  
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,  
And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and with surprise  
Froze my swift speech: she turning on my face  
The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,  
Spoke slowly in her place.

'I had great beauty: ask thou not my name:  
No one can be more wise than destiny.  
Many drew swords and died. Where'er I came  
I brought calamity.'

'No marvel, sovereign lady: in fair field  
Myself for such a face had boldly died.'  
I answered free; and turning I appealed  
To one that stood beside.

But she, with sick and scornful looks averse,  
To her full height her stately stature draws;  
'My youth,' she said, 'was blasted with a curse:  
This woman was the cause.

'I was cut off from hope in that sad place,  
Which yet to name my spirit loathes and fears:  
My father held his hand upon his face;  
I, blinded with my tears,

'Still strove to speak: my voice was thick with sighs  
As in a dream. Dimly I could descry  
The stern black-bearded kings with wolfish eyes,  
Waiting to see me die.

'The high masts flickered as they lay afloat ;  
The crowds, the temples, wavered, and the shore ;  
The bright death quivered at the victim's throat ;  
Touched ; and I knew no more.'

Whereto the other with a downward brow :

'I would the white cold heavy-plunging foam,  
Whirl'd by the wind, had rolled me deep below,  
Then when I left my home.'

Her slow full words sank thro' the silence drear,  
As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping sea :  
Sudden I heard a voice that cried, 'Come here,  
That I may look on thee.'

I turning saw, throned on a flowery rise,  
One sitting on a crimson scarf unrolled ;  
A queen, with swarthy cheeks and bold black eyes,  
Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile, began :

'I governed men by change, and so I swayed  
All moods. 'Tis long since I have seen a man.  
Once, like the moon, I made

'The ever-shifting currents of the blood  
According to my humour ebb and flow.

I have no men to govern in this wood :  
That makes my only woe.

'Nay—yet it chafes me that I could not bend  
One will ; nor tame and tutor with mine eye  
That dull cold-blooded Caesar. Prythee, friend,  
Where is Mark Antony ?

'The man, my lover, with whom I rode sublime  
On Fortune's neck : we sat as God by God :  
The Nilus would have risen before his time  
And flooded at our nod.

'We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep, and lit  
Lamps which outburned Canopus. O my life  
In Egypt! O the dalliance and the wit,  
The flattery and the strife,

'And the wild kiss, when fresh from war's alarms,  
My Hercules, my Roman Antony,  
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my arms,  
Contented there to die!

'And there he died: and when I heard my name  
Sighed forth with life I would not brook my fear  
Of the other: with a worm I baulked his fame.  
What else was left? look here!'

(With that she tore her robe apart, and half  
The polished argent of her breast to sight  
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a laugh,  
Showing the aspick's bite.)

'I died a Queen. The Roman soldier found  
Me lying dead, my crown about my brows,  
A name for ever!—lying robed and crowned,  
Worthy a Roman spouse.'

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest range  
Struck by all passion, did fall down and glance  
From tone to tone, and glided thro' all change  
Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for delight;  
Because with sudden motion from the ground  
She raised her piercing orbs, and filled with light  
The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tipt his keenest darts;  
As once they drew into two burning rings  
All beams of Love, melting the mighty hearts  
Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I heard  
A noise of some one coming thro' the lawn,  
And singing clearer than the crested bird,  
That claps his wings at dawn.

'The torrent brooks of hallowed Israel  
From craggy hollows pouring, late and soon,  
Sound all night long, in falling thro' the dell,  
Far-heard beneath the moon.

'The balmy moon of blessed Israel  
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with beams  
divine:

All night the splintered crags that wall the dell  
With spires of silver shine.'

As one that museth where broad sunshine laves  
The lawn by some cathedral, thro' the door  
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves  
Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charmed and tied  
To where he stands,—so stood I, when that  
flow

Of music left the lips of her that died  
To save her father's vow;

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,  
A maiden pure; as when she went along  
From Mizpeh's towered gate with welcome light,  
With timbrel and with song.

My words leapt forth: 'Heaven heads the count of  
crimes  
With that wild oath.' She rendered answer  
high:

'Not so, nor once alone; a thousand times  
I would be born and die.

'Single I grew, like some green plant, whose root  
    Creeps to the garden water-pipes beneath,  
Feeding the flower; but ere my flower to fruit  
    Changed, I was ripe for death.

'My God, my land, my father—these did move  
    Me from my bliss of life, that Nature gave,  
Lowered softly with a threefold cord of love  
    Down to a silent grave.

'And I went mourning, "No fair Hebrew boy  
    Shall smile away my maiden blame among  
The Hebrew mothers"—emptied of all joy,  
    Leaving the dance and song,

'Leaving the olive-gardens far below,  
    Leaving the promise of my bridal bower,  
The valleys of grape-loaded vines that glow  
    Beneath the battled tower.

'The light white cloud swam over us. Anon  
    We heard the lion roaring from his den;  
We saw the large white stars rise one by one,  
    Or, from the darkened glen,

'Saw God divide the night with flying flame,  
    And thunder on the everlasting hills.  
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief became  
    A solemn scorn of ills.

'When the next moon was rolled into the sky,  
    Strength came to me that equalled my desire.  
How beautiful a thing it was to die  
    For God and for my sire!

'It comforts me in this one thought to dwell,  
    That I subdued me to my father's will;  
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,  
    Sweetens the spirit still.



‘Moreover it is written that my race  
Hewed Ammon, hip and thigh, from Aroer  
On Arnon unto Minneth.’ Here her face  
Glowed, as I looked at her.

She locked her lips: she left me where I stood:  
‘Glory to God,’ she sang, and past afar,  
Thridding the sombre boskage of the wood,  
Toward the morning-star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,  
As one that from a casement leans his head,  
When midnight bells cease ringing suddenly,  
And the old year is dead.

‘Alas! alas!’ a low voice, full of care,  
Murmured beside me: ‘Turn and look on me:  
I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair,  
If what I was I be.

‘Would I had been some maiden coarse and poor!  
O me, that I should ever see the light!  
Those dragon eyes of angered Eleanor  
Do hunt me, day and night.’

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and trust:  
To whom the Egyptian: ‘O, you tamely died!  
You should have clung to Fulvia’s waist, and thrust  
The dagger thro’ her side.’

With that sharp sound the white dawn’s creeping  
beams,  
Stol’n to my brain, dissolved the mystery  
Of folded sleep. The captain of my dreams  
Ruled in the eastern sky.



Morn broadened on the borders of the dark,  
Ere I saw her, who clasped in her last trance  
Her murdered father's head, or Joan of Arc,  
A light of ancient France;

Or her, who knew that Love can vanquish Death,  
Who kneeling, with one arm about her king,  
Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath,  
Sweet as new buds in Spring.

No memory labours longer from the deep  
Gold-mines of thought to lift the hidden ore  
That glimpses, moving up, than I from sleep  
To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With what dull pain  
Compassed, how eagerly I sought to strike  
Into that wondrous track of dreams again!  
But no two dreams are like.

As when a soul laments, which hath been blest,  
Desiring what is mingled with past years,  
In yearnings that can never be exprest  
By signs or groans or tears;

Because all words, tho' culled with choicest art,  
Failing to give the bitter of the sweet  
Wither beneath the palate, and the heart  
Faints, faded by its heat.

### THE GOOSE

I KNEW an old wife lean and poor,  
Her rags scarce held together;  
There strode a stranger to the door,  
And it was windy weather.

He held a goose upon his arm,  
He uttered rhyme and reason,  
'Here, take the goose, and keep you warm,  
It is a stormy season.'

She caught the white goose by the leg,  
A goose—'twas no great matter.  
The goose let fall a golden egg  
With cackle and with clatter.

She dropt the goose, and caught the pelf,  
And ran to tell her neighbours;  
And blessed herself, and cursed herself  
And rested from her labours.

And feeding high, and living soft,  
Grew plump and able-bodied;  
Until the grave churchwarden doffed,  
The parson smirked and nodded.

So sitting, served by man and maid,  
She felt her heart grow prouder:  
But ah! the more the white goose laid  
It clacked and cackled louder.

It cluttered here, it chuckled there;  
It stirred the old wife's mettle:  
She shifted in her elbow-chair,  
And hurled the pan and kettle.

'A quinsy choke thy cursed note!'  
Then waxed her anger stronger.  
'Go, take the goose, and wring her throat,  
I will not bear it longer.'

Then yelped the cur, and yawled the cat;  
Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.  
The goose flew this way and flew that,  
And filled the house with clamour.

As head and heels upon the floor  
They floundered all together,  
There strode a stranger to the door  
And it was windy weather:

He took the goose upon his arm,  
He uttered words of scorning;  
'So keep you cold, or keep you warm,  
It is a stormy morning.'

The wild wind rang from park and plain,  
And round the attics rumbled,  
Till all the tables danced again,  
And half the chimneys tumbled.

The glass blew in, the fire blew out,  
The blast was hard and harder.  
Her cap blew off, her gown blew up,  
And a whirlwind cleared the larder;

And while on all sides breaking loose  
Her household fled the danger,  
Quoth she, 'The Devil take the goose,  
And God forget the stranger!'

## ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,  
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,  
Matched with an agèd wife, I mete and dole  
Unequal laws unto a savage race,  
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.  
I cannot rest from travel: I will drink  
Life to the lees: all times I have enjoyed  
Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those  
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when  
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades

Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;  
For always roaming with a hungry heart  
Much have I seen and known; cities of men  
And manners, climates, councils, governments,  
Myself not least, but honoured of them all;  
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,  
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.  
I am a part of all that I have met;  
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'  
Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades  
For ever and for ever when I move.  
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,  
To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!  
As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life  
Were all too little, and of one to me  
Little remains: but every hour is saved  
From that eternal silence, something more,  
A bringer of new things; and vile it were  
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,  
And this grey spirit yearning in desire  
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,  
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,  
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—  
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil  
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild  
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees  
Subdue them to the useful and the good.  
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere  
Of common duties, decent not to fail  
In offices of tenderness, and pay  
Meet adoration to my household gods,  
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.  
There lies the port: the vessel puffs her sail:

There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,  
Souls that have toiled, and wrought, and thought  
with me—

That ever with a frolic welcome took  
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed  
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;  
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;  
Death closes all: but something ere the end,  
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,  
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods,  
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:  
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the  
deep

Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,  
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.

Push off, and sitting well in order smite  
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds  
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths  
Of all the western stars, until I die.

It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:  
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,  
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.  
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'  
We are not now that strength which in old days  
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;  
One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will  
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

#### MORTE D'ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle rolled  
Among the mountains by the winter sea;  
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,  
Had fall'n in Lyonesse about their Lord,

King Arthur: then, because his wound was deep,  
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,  
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,  
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,  
A broken chancel with a broken cross,  
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.  
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one  
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:  
'The sequel of to-day unsolders all  
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights  
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep  
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we  
Shall never more, at any future time,  
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,  
Walking about the gardens and the halls  
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.  
I perish by this people which I made,—  
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again  
To rule once more—but let what will be, be,  
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm  
That without help I cannot last till morn.  
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,  
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how  
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm  
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
Holding the sword—and how I rowed across  
And took it, and have worn it, like a king:  
And, wheresoever I am sung or told  
In aftertime, this also shall be known:  
But now delay not: take Excalibur,  
And fling him far into the middle mere:  
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:  
'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,  
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.  
A little thing may harm a wounded man.  
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,  
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word.'

So saying, from the ruined shrine he stept  
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,  
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,  
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang  
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down  
By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,  
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,  
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,  
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth  
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt:  
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,  
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work  
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long  
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,  
This way and that dividing the swift mind,  
In act to throw: but at the last it seemed  
Better to leave Excalibur concealed  
There in the many-knotted waterflags,  
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.  
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:  
'Hast thou performed my mission which I gave?  
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:  
'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,  
And the wild water lapping on the crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:



'Thou hast betrayed thy nature and thy name,  
Not rendering true answer, as beseemed  
Thy fæalty, nor like a noble knight:  
For surer sign had followed, either hand,  
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.  
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.  
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again  
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing  
I bad thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time  
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,  
Counting the dewy pebbles, fixed in thought;  
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,  
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote  
His palms together, and he cried aloud,

'And if indeed I cast the brand away,  
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,  
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,  
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.  
What good should follow this, if this were done?  
What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,  
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.  
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand  
An act unprofitable, against himself?  
The King is sick, and knows not what he does.  
What record, or what relic of my lord  
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath  
And rumours of a doubt? but were this kept,  
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,  
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,  
Saying, "King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,  
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.  
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps  
Upon the hidden bases of the hills."



So might some old man speak in the aftertime  
To all the people, winning reverence.  
But now much honour and much fame were lost.'

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,  
And hid Excalibur the second time,  
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:  
'What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:  
'I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:  
'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,  
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!  
Authority forgets a dying king,  
Laid widowed of the power in his eye  
That bowed the will. I see thee what thou art,  
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,  
In whom should meet the offices of all,  
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;  
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl  
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.  
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,  
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence:  
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,  
I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,  
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged  
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutched the sword,  
And strongly wheeled and threw it. The great brand  
Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,  
And flashing round and round, and whirled in an  
arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,

Seen where the moving isles of winter shock  
By night, with noises of the northern sea.  
So flashed and fell the brand Excalibur:  
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
And caught him by the hilt, and brandished him  
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.  
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:  
'Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.  
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:  
'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems  
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,  
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,  
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,  
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;  
But when I looked again, behold an arm,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
That caught him by the hilt, and brandished him  
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.'

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:  
'My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.  
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,  
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear  
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,  
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,  
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes  
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere  
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,  
And would have spoken, but he found not words,  
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,

O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,  
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walked, King Arthur panted hard,  
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed  
When all the house is mute. So sighed the King,  
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, 'Quick, quick!  
I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,  
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walked,  
Larger than human on the frozen hills.

He heard the deep behind him, and a cry  
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.  
Dry clashed his harness in the icy caves  
And barren chasms, and all to left and right  
The bare black cliff clanged round him, as he based  
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang  
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armèd heels—  
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,  
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,  
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,  
Beneath them; and descending they were ware  
That all the decks were dense with stately forms  
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these  
Three Queens with crowns of gold—and from them  
rose

A cry that shivered to the tingling stars,  
And, as it were one voice, an agony  
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills  
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,  
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmured Arthur, 'Place me in the barge,'  
And to the barge they came. There those three  
Queens

Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.  
But she, that rose the tallest of them all  
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,  
And loosed the shattered casque, and chafed his  
    hands,  
And called him by his name, complaining loud,  
And dropping bitter tears against his brow  
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white  
And colourless, and like the withered moon  
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;  
And all his greaves and cuisses dashed with drops  
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—  
That made his forehead like a rising sun  
High from the daïs-throne—were parched with dust;  
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,  
Mixed with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.  
So like a shattered column lay the King;  
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,  
From spur to plume a star of tournament,  
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged  
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,  
'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?  
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?  
For now I see the true old times are dead,  
When every morning brought a noble chance,  
And every chance brought out a noble knight.  
Such times have been not since the light that led  
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.  
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved  
Which was an image of the mighty world;  
And I, the last, go forth companionless,  
And the days darken round me, and the years,  
Among new men, strange faces, other minds.'

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:  
‘The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.  
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?  
I have lived my life, and that which I have done  
May He within Himself make pure! but thou,  
If thou shouldst never see my face again,  
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice  
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.  
For what are men better than sheep or goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer  
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?  
For so the whole round earth is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.  
But now farewell. I am going a long way  
With these thou seest—if indeed I go—  
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)  
To the island-valley of Avilion;  
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,  
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies  
Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard-lawns  
And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea,  
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.’

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail  
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan  
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood  
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere  
Revolving many memories, till the hull  
Looked one black dot against the verge of dawn,  
And on the mere the wailing died away.

## ST. AGNES' EVE

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows  
Are sparkling to the moon:  
My breath to heaven like vapour goes:  
May my soul follow soon!  
The shadows of the convent-towers  
Slant down the snowy sward,  
Still creeping with the creeping hours  
That lead me to my Lord:  
Make Thou my spirit pure and clear  
As are the frosty skies,  
Or this first snowdrop of the year  
That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soiled and dark,  
To yonder shining ground;  
As this pale taper's earthly spark,  
To yonder argent round;  
So shows my soul before the Lamb,  
My spirit before Thee;  
So in mine earthly house I am,  
To that I hope to be.

Break up the heavens, O Lord! and far,  
Thro' all yon starlight keen,  
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,  
In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors;  
The flashes come and go;  
All heaven bursts her starry floors,  
And strows her lights below,  
And deepens on and up! the gates  
Roll back, and far within  
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,  
To make me pure of sin.

The sabbaths of Eternity,  
One sabbath deep and wide—  
A light upon the shining sea—  
The Bridegroom with his bride!

## BREAK, BREAK, BREAK

BREAK, break, break,  
On thy cold grey stones, O Sea!  
And I would that my tongue could utter  
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,  
That he shouts with his sister at play!  
O well for the sailor lad,  
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on  
To their haven under the hill;  
But O for the touch of a vanished hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,  
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!  
But the tender grace of a day that is dead  
Will never come back to me.

## FROM 'THE PRINCESS'

## (1)

As thro' the land at eve we went,  
And plucked the ripened ears,  
We fell out, my wife and I,  
O we fell out I know not why,  
And kissed again with tears.  
And blessings on the falling out  
That all the more endears,



When we fall out with those we love  
And kiss again with tears!  
For when we came where lies the child  
    We lost in other years,  
There above the little grave,  
O there above the little grave,  
    We kissed again with tears.

## (2)

Sweet and low, sweet and low,  
    Wind of the western sea,  
Low, low, breathe and blow,  
    Wind of the western sea!  
Over the rolling waters go,  
Come from the dying moon, and blow,  
    Blow him again to me;  
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.  
  
Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,  
    Father will come to thee soon;  
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,  
    Father will come to thee soon;  
Father will come to his babe in the nest,  
Silver sails all out of the west  
    Under the silver moon:  
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

## (3)

The splendour falls on castle walls  
And snowy summits old in story:  
The long light shakes across the lakes,  
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.  
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.



O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,  
And thinner, clearer, farther going!  
O sweet and far from cliff and scar  
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!  
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:  
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.  
O love, they die in yon rich sky,  
They faint on hill or field or river:  
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,  
And grow for ever and for ever.  
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

## (4)

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,  
Tears from the depth of some divine despair  
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,  
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,  
And thinking of the days that are no more.  
Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,  
That brings our friends up from the underworld,  
Sad as the last which reddens over one  
That sinks with all we love below the verge;  
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.  
Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns  
The earliest pipe of half-awakened birds  
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes  
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;  
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.  
Dear as remembered kisses after death,  
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feigned  
On lips that are for others; deep as love,  
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;  
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.

## (5)

O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying South  
Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,  
And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each,  
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,  
And dark and true and tender is the North.

O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow, and light  
Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,  
And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

O were I thou that she might take me in,  
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart  
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with love,  
Delaying as the tender ash delays  
To clothe herself, when all the woods are green?

O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown:  
Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,  
But in the North long since my nest is made.

O tell her, brief is life but love is long,  
And brief the sun of summer in the North,  
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,  
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her  
mine,  
And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.

## (6)

Home they brought her warrior dead:  
She nor swooned, nor uttered cry:  
All her maidens, watching, said,  
‘She must weep or she will die.’

Then they praised him, soft and low,  
Called him worthy to be loved,  
Truest friend and noblest foe;  
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,  
Lightly to the warrior stept,  
Took the face-cloth from the face;  
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,  
Set his child upon her knee—  
Like summer tempest came her tears—  
'Sweet my child, I live for thee.'

## (7)

Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;  
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;  
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font:  
The fire-fly wakens: waken thou with me.

Now droops the milkwhite peacock like a ghost,  
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

Now lies the earth all Danaë to the stars,  
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves  
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,  
And slips into the bosom of the lake:  
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip  
Into my bosom and be lost in me.

(8)

Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height:

What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang)  
In height and cold, the splendour of the hills?  
But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease  
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine,  
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;  
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,  
For Love is of the valley, come thou down  
And find him; by the happy threshold, he,  
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,  
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,  
Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk  
With Death and Morning on the silver horns,  
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,  
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,  
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls  
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors:  
But follow; let the torrent dance thee down  
To find him in the valley; let the wild  
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave  
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill  
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,  
That like a broken purpose waste in air:  
So waste not thou; but come; for all the vales  
Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth  
Arise to thee; the children call, and I  
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,  
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;  
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,  
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,  
And murmuring of innumerable bees.

## FROM 'IN MEMORIAM'

RING out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
The flying cloud, the frosty light:  
The year is dying in the night;  
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
For those that here we see no more;  
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
And ancient forms of party strife;  
Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
The faithless coldness of the times;  
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,  
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

## FROM 'MAUD'

## (1)

BIRDS in the high Hall-garden  
When twilight was falling,  
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,  
They were crying and calling.

Where was Maud? in our wood;  
And I, who else, was with her,  
Gathering woodland lilies,  
Myriads blow together.

Birds in our wood sang  
Ringing thro' the valleys,  
Maud is here, here, here  
In among the lilies.

I kissed her slender hand,  
She took the kiss sedately;  
Maud is not seventeen,  
But she is tall and stately.

I to cry out on pride  
Who have won her favour!  
O Maud were sure of Heaven  
If lowliness could save her.

I know the way she went  
Home with her maiden posy,  
For her feet have touched the meadows  
And left the daisies rosy.

Birds in the high Hall-garden  
Were crying and calling to her,  
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud?  
One is come to woo her.

Look, a horse at the door,  
And little King Charley snarling,  
Go back, my lord, across the moor,  
You are not her darling.

## (2)

I have led her home, my love, my only friend.  
There is none like her, none.  
And never yet so warmly ran my blood  
And sweetly, on and on  
Calming itself to the long-wished-for end,  
Full to the banks, close on the promised good.

None like her, none.  
Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pattering talk  
Seemed her light foot along the garden walk,  
And shook my heart to think she comes once  
more;  
But even then I heard her close the door,  
The gates of Heaven are closed, and she is gone.

There is none like her, none.  
Nor will be when our summers have deceased.  
O, art thou sighing for Lebanon  
In the long breeze that streams to thy delicious  
East,  
Sighing for Lebanon,  
Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here increased,  
Upon a pastoral slope as fair,  
And looking to the South, and fed

With honeyed rain and delicate air,  
And haunted by the starry head  
Of her whose gentle will has changed my fate,  
And made my life a perfumed altar-flame;  
And over whom thy darkness must have spread  
With such delight as theirs of old, thy great  
Forefathers of the thornless garden, there  
Shadowing the snow-limbed Eve from whom she  
came.

Here will I lie, while these long branches sway,  
And you fair stars that crown a happy day  
Go in and out as if at merry play,  
Who am no more so all forlorn,  
As when it seemed far better to be born  
To labour and the mattock-hardened hand,  
Than nursed at ease and brought to understand  
A sad astrology, the boundless plan  
That makes you tyrants in your iron skies,  
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,  
Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand  
His nothingness into man.

But now shine on, and what care I,  
Who in this stormy gulf have found a pearl  
The countercharm of space and hollow sky,  
And do accept my madness, and would die  
To save from some slight shame one simple girl.  
Would die; for sullen-seeming Death may give  
More life to Love than is or ever was  
In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet to live.  
Let no one ask me how it came to pass;  
It seems that I am happy, that to me  
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,  
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.



Not die; but live a life of truest breath,  
And teach true life to fight with mortal wrongs.  
O, why should Love, like men in drinking-songs,  
Spice his fair banquet with the dust of death?  
Make answer, Maud my bliss,  
Maud made my Maud by that long loving kiss,  
Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this?  
'The dusky strand of Death inwoven here  
With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself more dear.'

Is that enchanted moan only the swell  
Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay?  
And hark the clock within, the silver knell  
Of twelve sweet hours that past in bridal white,  
And died to live, long as my pulses play;  
But now by this my love has closed her sight  
And given false death her hand, and stolen away  
To dreamful wastes where footless fancies dwell  
Among the fragments of the golden day.  
May nothing there her maiden grace affright!  
Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy spell.  
My bride to be, my evermore delight,  
My own heart's heart and ownest own, farewell;  
It is but for a little space I go:  
And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell  
Beat to the noiseless music of the night!  
Has our whole earth gone nearer to the glow  
Of your soft splendours that you look so bright?  
*I* have climbed nearer out of lonely Hell.  
Beat, happy stars, timing with things below,  
Beat with my heart more blest than heart can tell,  
Blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe  
That seems to draw—but it shall not be so:  
Let all be well, be well.

(3)

Come into the garden, Maud,  
For the black bat, night, has flown,  
Come into the garden, Maud,  
I am here at the gate alone;  
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,  
And the musk of the rose is blown.  
For a breeze of morning moves,  
And the planet of Love is on high,  
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves  
On a bed of daffodil sky,  
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,  
To faint in his light, and to die.  
All night have the roses heard  
The flute, violin, bassoon;  
All night has the casement jessamine stirred  
To the dancers dancing in tune;  
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,  
And a hush with the setting moon.  
I said to the lily, 'There is but one  
With whom she has heart to be gay.  
When will the dancers leave her alone?  
She is weary of dance and play.'  
Now half to the setting moon are gone,  
And half to the rising day;  
Low on the sand and loud on the stone  
The last wheel echoes away.  
I said to the rose, 'The brief night goes  
In babble and revel and wine.  
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,  
For one that will never be thine?  
But mine, but mine,' so I sware to the rose,  
'For ever and ever, mine.'

And the soul of the rose went into my blood,  
As the music clashed in the hall;  
And long by the garden lake I stood,  
For I heard your rivulet fall  
From the lake to the meadow and on to the wood,  
Our wood, that is dearer than all;

From the meadow your walks have left so sweet  
That whenever a March-wind sighs  
He sets the jewel-print of your feet  
In violets blue as your eyes,  
To the woody hollows in which we meet  
And the valleys of Paradise.

The slender acacia would not shake  
One long milk-bloom on the tree;  
The white lake-blossom fell into the lake  
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;  
But the rose was awake all night for your sake,  
Knowing your promise to me;  
The lilies and roses were all awake,  
They sighed for the dawn and thee.

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,  
Come hither, the dances are done,  
In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,  
Queen lily and rose in one;  
Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,  
To the flowers, and be their sun.

There has fallen a splendid tear  
From the passion-flower at the gate.  
She is coming, my dove, my dear;  
She is coming, my life, my fate;

The red rose cries, 'She is near, she is near';  
And the white rose weeps, 'She is late';  
The larkspur listens, 'I hear, I hear';  
And the lily whispers, 'I wait.'

She is coming, my own, my sweet;  
Were it ever so airy a tread,  
My heart would hear her and beat,  
Were it earth in an earthy bed;  
My dust would hear her and beat,  
Had I lain for a century dead;  
Would start and tremble under her feet,  
And blossom in purple and red.

#### FROM 'THE IDYLLS OF THE KING'

IN Love, if Love be Love, if Love be ours,  
Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers:  
Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all.

It is the little rift within the lute,  
That by and by will make the music mute,  
And ever widening slowly silence all.

The little rift within the lover's lute,  
Or little pitted speck in garnered fruit,  
That rotting inward slowly moulders all.

It is not worth the keeping: let it go:  
But shall it? answer, darling, answer, no.  
And trust me not at all or all in all.

#### THE BROOK

##### AN IDYL

'HERE, by this brook, we parted; I to the East  
And he for Italy—too late—too late:  
One whom the strong sons of the world despise;

For lucky rhymes to him were scrip and share,  
And mellow metres more than cent for cent;  
Nor could he understand how money breeds,  
Thought it a dead thing; yet himself could make  
The thing that is not as the thing that is.  
O had he lived! In our schoolbooks we say,  
Of those that held their heads above the crowd,  
They flourished then or then; but life in him  
Could scarce be said to flourish, only touched  
On such a time as goes before the leaf,  
When all the wood stands in a mist of green,  
And nothing perfect: yet the brook he loved,  
For which, in branding summers of Bengal,  
Or ev'n the sweet half-English Neilgherry air  
I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,  
Prattling the primrose fancies of the boy,  
To me that loved him; for "O brook," he says,  
"O babbling brook," says Edmund in his rhyme,  
"Whence come you?" and the brook, why not? replies.

I come from haunts of coot and hern,  
I make a sudden sally  
And sparkle out among the fern,  
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,  
Or slip between the ridges,  
By twenty thorps, a little town,  
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

'Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite worn out,  
Travelling to Naples. There is Darnley bridge,  
It has more ivy; there the river; and there  
Stands Philip's farm where brook and river meet.

I chatter over stony ways,  
In little sharps and trebles,  
I bubble into eddying bays,  
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret  
By many a field and fallow,  
And many a fairy foreland set  
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

‘But Philip chattered more than brook or bird;  
Old Philip; all about the fields you caught  
His weary daylong chirping, like the dry  
High-elbowed grigs that leap in summer grass.

I wind about, and in and out,  
With here a blossom sailing,  
And here and there a lusty trout,  
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake  
Upon me, as I travel  
With many a silvery waterbreak  
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

‘O darling Katie Willows, his one child!  
A maiden of our century, yet most meek;  
A daughter of our meadows, yet not coarse;  
Straight, but as lissome as a hazel wand;  
Her eyes a bashful azure, and her hair  
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell  
Divides threefold to show the fruit within.

'Sweet Katie, once I did her a good turn,  
Her and her far-off cousin and betrothed,  
James Willows, of one name and heart with her.  
For here I came, twenty years back—the week  
Before I parted with poor Edmund; crost  
By that old bridge which, half in ruins then,  
Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the gleam  
Beyond it, where the waters marry—crost,  
Whistling a random bar of Bonny Doon,  
And pushed at Philip's garden-gate. The gate,  
Half-parted from a weak and scolding hinge,  
Stuck; and he clamoured from a casement, "Run"  
To Katie somewhere in the walks below,  
"Run, Katie!" Katie never ran: she moved  
To meet me, winding under woodbine bowers,  
A little fluttered, with her eyelids down,  
Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for a boon.

'What was it? less of sentiment than sense  
Had Katie; not illiterate; nor of those  
Who dabbling in the fount of fictive tears,  
And nursed by mealy-mouthed philanthropies,  
Divorce the Feeling from her mate the Deed.

'She told me. She and James had quarrelled.  
Why?

What cause of quarrel? None, she said, no cause:  
James had no cause: but when I prest the cause,  
I learnt that James had flickering jealousies  
Which angered her. Who angered James? I said.  
But Katie snatched her eyes at once from mine,  
And sketching with her slender pointed foot  
Some figure like a wizard's pentagram  
On garden gravel, let my query pass



Unclaimed, in flushing silence, till I asked  
If James were coming. "Coming every day,"  
She answered, "ever longing to explain,  
But evermore her father came across  
With some long-winded tale, and broke him short;  
And James departed vexed with him and her."  
How could I help her? "Would I—was it wrong?"  
(Claspt hands and that petitionary grace  
Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere she spoke)  
"O would I take her father for one hour,  
For one half-hour, and let him talk to me!"  
And even while she spoke, I saw where James  
Made towards us, like a wader in the surf,  
Beyond the brook, waist-deep in meadow-sweet.

'O Katie, what I suffered for your sake!  
For in I went, and called old Philip out  
To show the farm: full willingly he rose:  
He led me thro' the short sweet-smelling lanes  
Of his wheat-suburb, babbling as he went.  
He praised his land, his horses, his machines;  
He praised his ploughs, his cows, his hogs, his dogs;  
He praised his hens, his geese, his guinea-hens;  
His pigeons, who in session on their roofs  
Approved him, bowing at their own deserts:  
Then from the plaintive mother's teat he took  
Her blind and shuddering puppies, naming each,  
And naming those, his friends, for whom they  
were:

Then crost the common into Darnley chase  
To show Sir Arthur's deer. In copse and fern  
Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail.  
Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech,  
He pointed out a pasturing colt, and said:



“That was the four-year-old I sold the Squire.”  
And there he told a long long-winded tale  
Of how the Squire had seen the colt at grass,  
And how it was the thing his daughter wished,  
And how he sent the bailiff to the farm  
To learn the price, and what the price he asked,  
And how the bailiff swore that he was mad,  
But he stood firm; and so the matter hung;  
He gave them line: and five days after that  
He met the bailiff at the Golden Fleece,  
Who then and there had offered something more,  
But he stood firm; and so the matter hung;  
He knew the man; the colt would fetch its price;  
He gave them line: and how by chance at last  
(It may be May or April, he forgot,  
The last of April or the first of May)  
He found the bailiff riding by the farm,  
And, talking from the point, he drew him in,  
And there he mellowed all his heart with ale,  
Until they closed a bargain, hand in hand.

‘Then, while I breathed in sight of haven, he,  
Poor fellow, could he help it? recommenced,  
And ran through all the coltish chronicle,  
Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantivy, Tallyho,  
Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the Jilt,  
Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the rest,  
Till, not to die a listener, I arose,  
And with me Philip, talking still; and so  
We turned our foreheads from the falling sun,  
And following our own shadows thrice as long  
As when they followed us from Philip’s door,  
Arrived, and found the sun of sweet content  
Re-risen in Katie’s eyes, and all things well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,  
I slide by hazel covers;  
I move the sweet forget-me-nots  
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance  
Among my skimming swallows,  
I make the netted sunbeam dance  
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars  
In brambly wildernesses;  
I linger by my shingly bars;  
I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

Yes, men may come and go; and these are gone,  
All gone. My dearest brother, Edmund, sleeps,  
Not by the well-known stream and rustic spire,  
But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome  
Of Brunelleschi; sleeps in peace: and he,  
Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of words  
Remains the lean P. W. on his tomb:  
I scraped the lichen from it: Katie walks  
By the long wash of Australasian seas  
Far off, and holds her head to other stars,  
And breathes in converse seasons. All are gone.'

So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a stile  
In the long hedge, and rolling in his mind  
Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er the brook  
A tonsured head in middle age forlorn,  
Mused, and was mute. On a sudden a low breath  
Of tender air made tremble in the hedge  
The fragile bindweed-bells and briony rings;  
And he looked up. There stood a maiden near,

Waiting to pass. In much amaze he stared  
On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair  
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell  
Divides threefold to show the fruit within:  
Then, wondering, asked her 'Are you from the  
farm?'

'Yes,' answered she. 'Pray stay a little: pardon me;  
What do they call you?' 'Katie.' 'That were strange.  
What surname?' 'Willows.' 'No!' 'That is my  
name.'

'Indeed!' and here he looked so self-perplexed,  
That Katie laughed, and laughing blushed, till he  
Laughed also, but as one before he wakes,  
Who feels a glimmering strangeness in his dream.  
Then looking at her; 'Too happy, fresh and fair,  
Too fresh and fair in our sad world's best bloom,  
To be the ghost of one who bore your name  
About these meadows, twenty years ago.'

'Have you not heard?' said Katie, 'we came back.  
We bought the farm we tenanted before.  
Am I so like her? so they said on board.'  
Sir, if you knew her in her English days,  
My mother, as it seems you did, the days  
That most she loves to talk of, come with me.  
My brother James is in the harvest-field:  
But she—you will be welcome—O, come in!

## THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

### I

HALF a league, half a league,  
Half a league onward,  
All in the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

‘Forward, the Light Brigade!  
Charge for the guns!’ he said;  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

## II

‘Forward, the Light Brigade!’  
Was there a man dismayed?  
Not tho’ the soldier knew  
Some one had blundered:  
Their’s not to make reply,  
Their’s not to reason why,  
Their’s but to do and die:  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

## III

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon in front of them  
Volleyed and thundered;  
Stormed at with shot and shell,  
Boldly they rode and well,  
Into the jaws of Death,  
Into the mouth of Hell  
Rode the six hundred.

## IV

Flashed all their sabres bare,  
Flashed as they turned in air,  
Sabring the gunners there,  
Charging an army, while  
All the world wondered:  
Plunged in the battery-smoke  
Right thro’ the line they broke;  
Cossack and Russian

Reeled from the sabre-stroke  
 Shattered and sundered.  
 Then they rode back, but not,  
 Not the six hundred.

## V

Cannon to right of them,  
 Cannon to left of them,  
 Cannon behind them  
     Volleyed and thundered;  
 Stormed at with shot and shell,  
 While horse and hero fell,  
 They that had fought so well  
 Came thro' the jaws of Death  
 Back from the mouth of Hell,  
 All that was left of them,  
     Left of six hundred.

## VI

When can their glory fade?  
 O the wild charge they made!  
     All the world wondered.  
 Honour the charge they made!  
 Honour the Light Brigade,  
     Noble six hundred!

## NORTHERN FARMER

## OLD STYLE

## I

WHEER'asta beänsaw long and meä liggin''ere aloän?  
 Noorse? thoort nowt o' a noorse: whoy, Doctor's  
     abeän an' agoän:  
 Says that I moänt 'a naw moor yaäle: but I beänt  
     a fool:  
 Git ma my yaäle, for I beänt a-goin' to breäk my  
     rule.

## II

Doctors, they knaws nowt, for a says what's naw-  
ways true:

Naw soort o' koind o' use to saäy the things that a  
do.

I've 'ed my point o' yaäle ivry noight sin' I beän  
'ere,

An' I've 'ed my quart ivry market-noight for foorty  
year.

## III

Parson's a beän loikewise, an' a sittin' 'ere o' my  
bed.

'The amoighty's a taäkin o' you to 'issén, my  
friend,' a said,

An' a towd ma my sins, an's toithe were due, an' I  
gied it in hond;

I done my duty by un, as I 'a done by the lond.

## IV

Larn'd a ma' beä. I reckons I 'annot sa mooch to larn.

But a cost oop, thot a did, 'boot Bessy Marris's barn.

Thof a knaws I hallus voäted wi Squoire an'  
choorch an' staäte,

An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver agin the raäte.

## V

An' I hallus comed to 's choorch afoor moy Sally  
wur deäd,

An' 'eerd un a bummin' awaäy loike a buzzard-  
clock ower my yeäd,

An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd but I thowt a 'ad  
summut to saäy,

An I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said an' I comed  
awaäy.

buzzard-clock] cockchafer.

## VI

Bessy Marris's barn! tha knaws she laäid it to meä.  
 Mowt 'a beän, mayhap, for she wur a bad un, sheä.  
 'Siver, I kep un, I kep un, my lass, tha mun under-  
 stond;

I done my duty by un as I 'a done by the lond.

## VII

But Parson a comes an' a goos, an' a says it eäsy an'  
 freeä

'The amoighty's a taäkin' o' you to 'issén, my  
 friend,' says 'eä.

I weänt saäy men be loiars, thof summun said it in  
 'aäste:

But a reäds wonn sarmin a weeäk, an' I 'a stubb'd  
 Thornaby waäste.

## VIII

D'ya moind the waäste, my lass? naw, naw, tha  
 was not born then;

Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eerd un mysen;  
 Moäst loike a butter-bump, for I 'eerd un aboot an'  
 aboot,

But I stubb'd un oop wi' the lot, an' raäved an'  
 rembled un oot.

## IX

Keäper's it wur; fo' they fun un theer a-laäid on is'  
 faäce

Doon i' the woild 'enemies afoor I comed to the  
 plaäce.

Noäks or Thimbleby—toner 'ed shot un as deäd as  
 a naäil.

Noäks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'soize—but git ma  
 my yaäle.

butter-bump] bittern.

'enemies] anemones.

## X

Dubbut looäk at the waäste: theer warn't not feäd  
for a cow:  
Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an' looäk at it  
now—  
Warnt worth nowt a haäcre, an' now theer 's lots  
o' feäd,  
Fourscore yows upon it an' some on it doon in seäd.

## XI

Nobbut a bit on it 's left, an' I meän'd to 'a stubb'd  
it at fall,  
Done it ta-year I meän'd, an' runn'd plow thruff  
it an' all,  
If godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut let ma aloän,  
Meä, wi' haäte oonderd haäcre o' Squoire's, an'  
lond o' my oän.

## XII

Do godamoighty knaw what a's doing a-taäkin' o'  
meä?  
I beänt wonn as saws 'ere a beän an' yonder a peä;  
An' Squoire 'ull be sa mad an' all—a dear a' dear!  
And I 'a monaged for Squoire come Michaelmas  
thirty year.

## XIII

A mowt 'a taäken Joänes, as 'ant a 'aäpoth o' sense,  
Or a mowt 'a taäken Robins—a niver mended a  
fence:  
But godamoighty a moost taäke meä an' täke ma  
now  
Wi 'auf the cows to cauve an' Thornaby holms to  
plow!



## XIV

Looäk 'ow quoloty smoiles when they sees ma a  
passin' by,  
Says to thessén naw doot 'what a mon a beä  
sewer-ly!'  
For they knaws what I beän to Squoire sin fust a  
comed to the 'All;  
I done my duty by Squoire an' I done my duty by  
all.

## XV

Squoire's in Lunnon, an' summun I reckons 'ull 'a  
to wroite,  
For who's to howd the lond ater meä thot muddles  
ma quoit;  
Sartin-sewer I beä, thot a weänt niver give it to  
Joänes,  
Noither a moänt to Robins—a niver rembles the  
stoäns.

## XVI

But summun 'ull come ater meä mayhap wi' 'is  
kittle o' steäm  
Huzzin' an' maäsin' the blessed feälds wi' the  
Divil's oän teäm.  
Gin I mun doy I mun doy, thaw loife they says is  
sweet,  
But sin' I mun doy I mun doy, for I couldn abear to  
see it.

## XVII

What atta stannin' theer for, an' doesn bring ma  
the yaäle?  
Doctor's a 'toattler, lass, an a's hallas i' the owd  
taäle;

I weänt breäk rules for Doctor, a knaws naw moor  
 nor a floy;  
 Git ma my yaäle I tell tha, an' gin I mun doy I mun  
 doy.

## NORTHERN FARMER

## NEW STYLE

## I

DOSN'T thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they canters  
 awaäy?

Proputty, proputty, proputty—that's what I 'ears  
 'em saäy.

Proputty, proputty, proputty—Sam, thou's an ass  
 for thy paaïns:

Theer's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs nor in all thy  
 braaïns.

## II

Woä—theer's a crow to pluck wi' tha, Sam: yon's  
 parson's 'ouse—

Dosn't thou know that a man mun be eäther a man  
 or a mouse?

Time to think on it then; for thou'll be twenty to  
 weeäk.

Proputty, proputty—woä then woä—let ma 'ear  
 mysén speäk.

## III

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as beän a-talkin' o'  
 thee;

Thou's been talkin' to muther, an' she beän a tellin'  
 it me.

Thou'll not marry for munny—thou's sweet upo'  
 parson's lass—

Noä—thou'll marry fur luvv—an' we boäth on us  
 thinks tha an ass.

to weeäk] this week.

## IV

Seeä'd her todaäy goä by—Saäint's-daäy—they  
was ringing the bells.

She's a beauty thou thinks—an' soä is scoors o'  
gells,

Them as 'as munny an' all—wot's a beauty?—the  
flower as blaws.

But proputty, proputty sticks, an' proputty,  
proputty graws.

## V

Do'ant be stunt: taäke time: I knaws what maäkes  
tha sa mad.

Warn't I craäzed fur the lasses mysén when I wur a  
lad?

But I knaw'd a Quaäker feller as often 'as tow'd ma  
this:

'Doänt thou marry for munny, but goä wheer  
munny is!'

## VI

An' I went wheer munny war: an' thy mother coom  
to 'and,

Wi' lots o' munny laaïd by, an' a nicetish bit o'  
land.

Maäybe she warn't a beauty:—I niver giv it a  
thowt—

But warn't she as good to cuddle an' kiss as a lass  
as 'ant nowt?

## VII

Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she weänt 'a nowt when  
'e 's deäd,

Mun be a guvness, lad, or summat, and addle her  
breäd:

stunt] obstinate.

addle] earn.

Why? fur 'e 's nobbut a curate, an' weänt nivir git  
 naw 'igher;  
 An' 'e maäde the bed as 'e ligs on afoor 'e coom'd  
 to the shire.

## VIII

And thin 'e coom'd to the parish wi' lots o' 'Varsity  
 debt,  
 Stook to his taaïl they did, an' 'e 'ant got shut on  
 'em yet.  
 An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the grip, wi' noän to lend  
 im' a shove,  
 Woorse nor a far-welter'd yowe: fur, Sammy, 'e  
 married fur luvv.

## IX

Luvv? what's luvv? thou can luvv thy lass an'  
 'er munny too,  
 Maakin' 'em goä together as they've good right  
 to do.  
 Could'n I luvv thy muther by cause o' 'er munny  
 laaïd by?  
 Naäy—for I luvv'd 'er a vast sight moor fur it:  
 reäson why.

## X

Ay an' thy muther says thou wants to marry the  
 lass,  
 Cooms of a gentleman burn: an' we boäth on us  
 thinks tha an ass.  
 Woä then, propuppy, wiltha?—an ass as near as  
 mays nowt—  
 Woä then, wiltha? dangtha!—the bees is as fell as  
 owt.

mays nowt] makes nothing.

fell as owt] fierce as  
 anything.

## XI

Break me a bit o' the esh for his 'eäd, lad, out o' the  
fence!

Gentleman burn! what's gentleman burn? is it  
shillins an' pence?

Proputty, proputty's ivrything 'ere, an', Sammy,  
I'm blest

If it isn't the saäme oop yonder, fur them as 'as it's  
the best.

## XII

Tis'n them as 'as munny as break into 'ouses an'  
steäls,

Them as 'as coäts to their backs an' taäkes their  
regular meäls.

Noä, but it's them as niver knaws wheer a meäl's to  
be 'ad.

Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the poor in a loomp  
is bad.

## XIII

Them or thir feythurs, tha sees, mun 'a beän a laäzy  
lot,

Fur work mun 'a gone to the gittin' whiniver  
munny was got.

Feyther 'ad ammost nowt; leästwaays 'is munny  
was 'id.

But 'e tued an' moil'd 'issén deäd, an 'e died a good  
un, 'e did.

## XIV

Look thou theer wheer Wigglesby beck comes  
out by the 'ill!

Feyther run up to the farm, an' I runs up to the  
mill;

An' I'll run up to the brig, an' that thou'll live to  
see;

And if thou marries a good un I'll laäve the land to  
thee.

## XV

Thim's my noätions, Sammy, wheerby I means to  
stick;

But if thou marries a bad un, I'll leäve the land to  
Dick.—

Coom oop, propuppy, propuppy—that's what I 'ears  
'im saäy—

Propuppy, propuppy, propuppy—canter an' canter  
awaäy.

## LUCRETIVS

LUCILIA, wedded to Lucretius, found  
Her master cold; for when the morning flush  
Of passion and the first embrace had died  
Between them, tho' he loved her none the less,  
Yet often when the woman heard his foot  
Return from pacings in the field, and ran  
To greet him with a kiss, the master took  
Small notice, or austere, for—his mind  
Half buried in some weightier argument,  
Or fancy-borne perhaps upon the rise  
And long roll of the Hexameter—he past  
To turn and ponder those three hundred scrolls  
Left by the Teacher whom he held divine.  
She brooked it not; but wrathful, petulant,  
Dreaming some rival, sought and found a witch  
Who brewed the philtre which had power, they said,  
To lead an errant passion home again.  
And this, at times, she mingled with his drink,  
And this destroyed him; for the wicked broth

Confused the chemic labour of the blood,  
And tickling the brute brain within the man's  
Made havock among those tender cells, and checked  
His power to shape: he loathed himself; and once  
After a tempest woke upon a morn  
That mocked him with returning calm, and cried,

‘Storm in the night! for thrice I heard the rain  
Rushing; and once the flash of a thunderbolt—  
Methought I never saw so fierce a fork—  
Struck out the streaming mountain-side, and  
showed

A riotous confluence of watercourses  
Blanching and billowing in a hollow of it,  
Where all but yester-eve was dusty-dry.

‘Storm, and what dreams, ye holy Gods, what  
dreams!

For thrice I wakened after dreams. Perchance  
We do but recollect the dreams that come  
Just ere the waking: terrible! for it seemed  
A void was made in Nature; all her bonds  
Cracked; and I saw the flaring atom streams  
And torrents of her myriad universe,  
Ruining along the illimitable inane,  
Fly on to clash together again, and make  
Another and another frame of things  
For ever: that was mine, my dream, I knew it—  
Of and belonging to me, as the dog  
With inward yelp and restless forefoot plies  
His function of the woodland: but the next!  
I thought that all the blood by Sylla shed  
Came driving rainlike down again on earth,  
And where it dashed the reddening meadow,  
sprang

No dragon warriors from Cadmean teeth,  
For these I thought my dream would show to me,  
But girls, Hetairai, curious in their art,  
Hired animalisms, vile as those that made  
The mulberry-faced Dictator's orgies worse  
Than aught they fable of the quiet Gods.  
And hands they mixt, and yelled and round me  
drove

In narrowing circles till I yelled again  
Half-suffocated, and sprang up, and saw—  
Was it the first beam of my latest day?

‘Then, then, from utter gloom stood out the  
breasts,  
The breasts of Helen, and hoveringly a sword  
Now over and now under, now direct,  
Pointed itself to pierce, but sank down shamed  
At all that beauty; and as I stared, a fire,  
The fire that left a roofless Ilion,  
Shot out of them, and scorched me that I woke.

‘Is this thy vengeance, holy Venus, thine,  
Because I would not one of thine own doves,  
Not ev’n a rose, were offered to thee? thine,  
Forgetful how my rich procœmion makes  
Thy glory fly along the Italian field,  
In lays that will outlast thy Deity?

‘Deity? nay, thy worshippers. My tongue  
Trips, or I speak profanely. Which of these  
Angers thee most, or angers thee at all?  
Not if thou be'st of those who far aloof  
From envy, hate and pity, and spite and scorn,  
Live the great life which all our greatest fain  
Would follow, center'd in eternal calm.



‘Nay, if thou can’st, O Goddess, like ourselves  
Touch, and be touched, then would I cry to thee  
To kiss thy Mavors, roll thy tender arms  
Round him, and keep him from the lust of blood  
That makes a steaming slaughter-house of Rome.

‘Ay, but I meant not thee; I meant not her,  
Whom all the pines of Ida shook to see  
Slide from that quiet heaven of hers, and tempt  
The Trojan, while his neat-herds were abroad;  
Nor her that o’er her wounded hunter wept  
Her Deity false in human-amorous tears;  
Nor whom her beardless apple-arbiter  
Decided fairest. Rather, O ye Gods,  
Poet-like, as the great Sicilian called  
Calliope to grace his golden verse—  
Ay, and this Kypris also—did I take  
That popular name of thine to shadow forth  
The all-generating powers and genial heat  
Of Nature, when she strikes through the thick blood  
Of cattle, and light is large and lambs are glad  
Nosing the mother’s udder, and the bird  
Makes his heart voice amid the blaze of flowers:  
Which things appear the work of mighty Gods.

‘The Gods! and if I go *my* work is left  
Unfinished—if I go. The Gods, who haunt  
The lucid interspace of world and world,  
Where never creeps a cloud, or moves a wind,  
Nor ever falls the least white star of snow,  
Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,  
Nor sound of human sorrow mounts to mar  
Their sacred everlasting calm! and such,  
Not all so fine, nor so divine a calm,

Not such, nor all unlike it, man may gain  
Letting his own life go. The Gods, the Gods!  
If all be atoms, how then should the Gods  
Being atomic not be dissoluble,  
Not follow the great law? My master held  
That Gods there are, for all men so believe.  
I prest my footsteps into his, and meant  
Surely to lead my Memmius in a train  
Of flowery clauses onward to the proof  
That Gods there are, and deathless. Meant? I  
meant?

I have forgotten what I meant: my mind  
Stumbles, and all my faculties are lamed.

‘Look where another of our Gods, the Sun,  
Apollo, Delius, or of older use  
All-seeing Hyperion—what you will—  
Has mounted yonder; since he never sware,  
Except his wrath were wreaked on wretched man,  
That he would only shine among the dead  
Hereafter; tales! for never yet on earth  
Could dead flesh creep, or bits of roasting ox  
Moan round the spit—nor knows he what he sees;  
King of the East altho’ he seem, and girt  
With song and flame and fragrance, slowly lifts  
His golden feet on those empurpled stairs  
That climb into the windy halls of heaven:  
And here he glances on an eye new-born,  
And gets for greeting but a wail of pain;  
And here he stays upon a freezing orb  
That fain would gaze upon him to the last:  
And here upon a yellow eyelid fall’n  
And closed by those who mourn a friend in vain,  
Not thankful that his troubles are no more.

And me, altho' his fire is on my face  
Blinding, he sees not, nor at all can tell  
Whether I mean this day to end myself,  
Or lend an ear to Plato where he says,  
That men like soldiers may not quit the post  
Allotted by the Gods: but he that holds  
The Gods are careless, wherefore need he care  
Greatly for them, nor rather plunge at once,  
Being troubled, wholly out of sight, and sink  
Past earthquake—ay, and gout and stone, that  
break

Body toward death, and palsy, death-in-life,  
And wretched age—and worst disease of all.  
These prodigies of myriad nakednesses,  
And twisted shapes of lust, unspeakable,  
Abominable, strangers at my hearth  
Not welcome, harpies miring every dish,  
The phantom husks of something foully done,  
And fleeting thro' the boundless universe,  
And blasting the long quiet of my breast  
With animal heat and dire insanity.

‘How should the mind, except it loved them, clasp  
These idols to herself? or do they fly  
Now thinner, and now thicker, like the flakes  
In a fall of snow, and so press in, perforce  
Of multitude, as crowds that in an hour  
Of civic tumult jam the doors, and bear  
The keepers down, and throng, their rags and they,  
The basest, far into that council-hall  
Where sit the best and stateliest of the land?

‘Can I not fling this horror off me again,  
Seeing with how great ease Nature can smile,

Balmier and nobler from her bath of storm,  
At random ravage? and how easily  
The mountain there has cast his cloudy slough,  
Now towering o'er him in serenest air,  
A mountain o'er a mountain, ay, and within  
All hollow as the hopes and fears of men.

‘But who was he, that in the garden snared  
Picus and Faunus, rustic Gods? a tale  
To laugh at—more to laugh at in myself—  
For look! what is it? there? yon arbutus  
Totters; a noiseless riot underneath  
Strikes through the wood, sets all the tops quiver-  
ing—

The mountain quickens into Nymph and Faun;  
And here an Oread, and this way she runs  
Before the rest—A satyr, a satyr, see—  
Follows; but him I proved impossible;  
Twy-natured is no nature: yet he draws  
Nearer and nearer, and I scan him now  
Beastlier than any phantom of his kind  
That ever butted his rough brother-brute  
For lust or lusty blood or provender:  
I hate, abhor, spit, sicken at him; and she  
Loathes him as well; such a precipitate heel,  
Fledged as it were with Mercury's ankle wing,  
Whirls her to me: but will she fling herself,  
Shameless upon me? Catch her, goatfoot: nay,  
Hide, hide them, million-myrtled wilderness,  
And cavern-shadowing laurels, hide! do I wish—  
What?—that the bush were leafless? or to whelm  
All of them in one massacre? O ye Gods,  
I know you careless, yet, behold, to you  
From childly wont and ancient use I call—

I thought I lived securely as yourselves—  
No lewdness, narrowing envy, monkey-spite,  
No madness of ambition, avarice, none:  
No larger feast than under plane or pine  
With neighbours laid along the grass, to take  
Only such cups as left us friendly-warm,  
Affirming each his own philosophy—  
Nothing to mar the sober majesties  
Of settled, sweet, Epicurean life.  
But now it seems some unseen monster lays  
His vast and filthy hands upon my will,  
Wrenching it backward into his; and spoils  
My bliss in being; and it was not great;  
For save when shutting reasons up in rhythm,  
Or Heliconian honey in living words,  
To make a truth less harsh, I often grew  
Tired of so much within our little life,  
Or of so little in our little life—  
Poor little life that toddles half an hour  
Crowned with a flower or two, and there an end—  
And since the nobler pleasure seems to fade,  
Why should I, beastlike as I find myself,  
Not manlike end myself?—our privilege—  
What beast has heart to do it? And what man,  
What Roman would be dragged in triumph thus?  
Not I; not he, who bears one name with her,  
Whose death-blow struck the dateless doom of kings,  
When, brooking not the Tarquin in her veins,  
She made her blood in sight of Collatine  
And all his peers, flushing the guiltless air,  
Spout from the maiden fountain in her heart.  
And from it sprang the Commonwealth, which  
breaks  
As I am breaking now!

‘And therefore now

Let her, that is the womb and tomb of all,  
Great Nature, take, and forcing far apart  
Those blind beginnings that have made me man,  
Dash them anew together at her will  
Through all her cycles—into man once more,  
Or beast or bird or fish, or opulent flower—  
But till this cosmic order everywhere  
Shattered into one earthquake in one day  
Cracks all to pieces,—and that hour perhaps  
Is not so far when momentary man  
Shall seem no more a something to himself,  
But he, his hopes and hates, his homes and  
fanes,  
And even his bones long laid within the grave,  
The very sides of the grave itself shall pass,  
Vanishing, atom and void, atom and void,  
Into the unseen for ever,—till that hour,  
My golden work in which I told a truth  
That stays the rolling Ixionian wheel,  
And numbs the Fury’s ringlet-snake, and plucks  
The mortal soul from out immortal hell,  
Shall stand: aye, surely: then it fails at last  
And perishes as I must; for O Thou,  
Passionless bride, divine Tranquillity,  
Yearned after by the wisest of the wise,  
Who fail to find thee, being as thou art  
Without one pleasure and without one pain,  
Howbeit I know thou surely must be mine  
Or soon or late, yet out of season, thus  
I woo thee roughly, for thou carest not  
How roughly men may woo thee so they win—  
Thus—thus: the soul flies out and dies in the  
air.’

With that he drove the knife into his side:  
She heard him raging, heard him fall; ran in,  
Beat breast, tore hair, cried out upon herself  
As having failed in duty to him, shrieked  
That she but meant to win him back, fell on him,  
Clasped, kissed him, wailed: he answered, 'Care not  
thou!

What matters? All is over: Fare thee well!'

## OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

1809-1894

### THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS

THIS is the ship of pearl, which poets feign,  
Sails the unshadowed main,—  
The venturous bark that flings  
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings  
In gulfs enchanted, where the siren sings,  
And coral reefs lie bare,  
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming  
hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;  
Wrecked is the ship of pearl!  
And every chambered cell,  
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,  
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,  
Before thee lies revealed,—  
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!

Year after year behold the silent toil  
That spread his lustrous coil;  
Still, as the spiral grew,  
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,



Stole with soft step its shining archway through,  
Built up its idle door,  
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old  
no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,  
Child of the wandering sea,  
Cast from her lap forlorn!  
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born  
Than ever Triton blew from wreathèd horn!  
While on mine ear it rings,  
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice  
that sings:—

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,  
As the swift seasons roll!  
Leave thy low-vaulted past!  
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,  
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,  
Till thou at length art free,  
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea.

## THE DEACON'S MASTERPIECE

OR

## THE WONDERFUL 'ONE-HOSS SHAY'

A LOGICAL STORY

HAVE you heard of the wonderful one-hoss shay,  
That was built in such a logical way  
It ran a hundred years to a day,  
And then, of a sudden, it—ah, but stay,  
I'll tell what happened without delay,  
Scaring the parson into fits,  
Frightening people out of their wits,—  
Have you ever heard of that, I say?



Seventeen hundred and fifty-five.

*Georgius Secundus* was then alive,—

Snuffy old drone from the German hive.

That was the year when Lisbon town

Saw the earth open and gulp her down,

And Braddock's army was done so brown,

Left without a scalp to its crown.

It was on that terrible Earthquake-day

That the Deacon finished the one-hoss shay.

Now in building of chaises, I tell you what,

There is always *somewhere* a weakest spot,—

In hub, tire, felloe, in spring or thill,

In panel, or crossbar, or floor, or sill,

In screw, bolt, thoroughbrace,—lurking still,

Find it somewhere you must and will,—

Above or below, or within or without,—

And that's the reason, beyond a doubt,

A chaise *breaks down*, but doesn't *wear out*.

But the Deacon swore (as Deacons do,

With an 'I dew vum,' or an 'I tell *yeou*,')

He would build one shay to beat the taown

'n' the keounty 'n' all the kentry raoun';

It should be so built that it *could n'* break daown:

—'Fur,' said the Deacon, 't's mighty plain

Thut the weakes' place mus' stan' the strain;

'n' the way t' fix it, uz I maintain,

Is only jest

T' make that place uz strong uz the rest.'

So the Deacon inquired of the village folk

Where he could find the strongest oak,

That could n't be split nor bent nor broke,—

That was for spokes and floor and sills;

He sent for lancewood to make the thills;

The crossbars were ash, from the straightest trees;  
The panels of white-wood, that cuts like cheese,  
But lasts like iron for things like these;  
The hubs of logs from the 'Settler's ellum,'—  
Last of its timber,—they couldn't sell 'em,  
Never an axe had seen their chips,  
And the wedges flew from between their lips,  
Their blunt ends frizzled like celery-tips;  
Step and prop-iron, bolt and screw,  
Spring, tire, axle, and linchpin too,  
Steel of the finest, bright and blue;  
Thoroughbrace bison-skin, thick and wide;  
Boot, top, dasher, from tough old hide  
Found in the pit when the tanner died.  
That was the way he 'put her through.'—  
'There:' said the Deacon, 'naow she'll dew.'

Do! I tell you, I rather guess  
She was a wonder, and nothing less!  
Colts grew horses, beards turned gray,  
Deacon and deaconess dropped away,  
Children and grandchildren—where were they?  
But there stood the stout old one-hoss shay  
As fresh as on Lisbon-earthquake-day!

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED; it came and found  
The Deacon's masterpiece strong and sound.  
Eighteen hundred increased by ten;—  
'Hahnsum kerridge' they called it then.

Eighteen hundred and twenty came;—  
Running as usual; much the same.  
Thirty and forty at last arrive,  
And then came fifty, and FIFTY-FIVE.

Little of all we value here  
Wakes on the morn of its hundredth year  
Without both feeling and looking queer.  
In fact there's nothing that keeps its youth,  
So far as I know, but a tree and truth.  
(This is a moral that runs at large;  
Take it.—You're welcome.—No extra charge.)

FIRST OF NOVEMBER,—the Earthquake-day.—  
There are traces of age in the one-hoss shay,  
A general flavour of mild decay,  
But nothing local, as one may say.  
There couldn't be,—for the Deacon's art  
Had made it so like in every part  
That there wasn't a chance for one to start.  
For the wheels were just as strong as the thills,  
And the floor was just as strong as the sills,  
And the panels just as strong as the floor,  
And the whippetree neither less nor more,  
And the back-crossbar as strong as the fore,  
And spring and axle and hub *encore*.  
And yet, *as a whole*, it is past a doubt  
In another hour it will be *worn out*!

First of November, 'Fifty-five!  
This morning the parson takes a drive.  
Now, small boys, get out of the way!  
Here comes the wonderful one-hoss shay,  
Drawn by a rat-tailed ewe-necked bay.  
'Huddop!' said the parson.—Off went they.  
The parson was working his Sunday's text,—  
Had got to *fifthly*, and stopped perplexed  
At what the—Moses—was coming next.

All at once the horse stood still,  
Close by the meet'n'-house on the hill.  
—First a shiver, and then a thrill,  
Then something decidedly like a spill,—  
And the parson was sitting upon a rock,  
At half-past nine by the meet'n'-house clock,—  
Just the hour of the Earthquake shock!  
—What do you think the parson found,  
When he got up and stared around?  
The poor old chaise in a heap or mound,  
As if it had been to the mill and ground!  
You see, of course, if you're not a dunce,  
How it went to pieces all at once,—  
All at once, and nothing first,—  
Just as bubbles do when they burst.

End of the wonderful one-hoss shay.  
Logic is logic. That's all I say.

## SIR FRANCIS DOYLE

1810–1888

### THE PRIVATE OF THE BUFFS

Some Sikhs and a private of the Buffs having remained behind with the grog carts, fell into the hands of the Chinese. On the next morning they were brought before the authorities, and commanded to perform the *Kotow*. The Sikhs obeyed; but Moyse, the English soldier, declaring that he would not prostrate himself before any Chinaman alive, was immediately knocked upon the head, and his body thrown on a dunghill.—*The Times*.

*LAST night*, among his fellow roughs,  
He jested, quaffed, and swore,  
A drunken private of the Buffs,  
Who never looked before.

*To-day*, beneath the foeman's frown,  
He stands in Elgin's place,  
Ambassador from Britain's crown,  
And type of all her race.

Poor, reckless, rude, low-born, untaught,  
Bewildered, and alone,  
A heart, with English instinct fraught,  
He yet can call his own.  
Aye, tear his body limb from limb,  
Bring cord, or axe, or flame:  
He only knows, that not through *him*  
Shall England come to shame.

Far Kentish hop-fields round him seemed,  
Like dreams, to come and go;  
Bright leagues of cherry-blossom gleamed,  
One sheet of living snow;  
The smoke, above his father's door,  
In grey soft eddyings hung:  
Must he then watch it rise no more,  
Doomed by himself so young?

Yes, honour calls!—with strength like steel  
He put the vision by.  
Let dusky Indians whine and kneel;  
An English lad must die.  
And thus, with eyes that would not shrink,  
With knee to man unbent,  
Unflinching on its dreadful brink,  
To his red grave he went.

Vain, mightiest fleets of iron framed;  
Vain, those all-shattering guns;  
Unless proud England keep, untamed,  
The strong heart of her sons.

So, let his name through Europe ring—  
A man of mean estate,  
Who died, as firm as Sparta's King,  
Because his soul was great.

## WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

1811-1863

## LITTLE BILLEE

THERE were three sailors of Bristol city  
Who took a boat and went to sea,

But first with beef and captain's biscuits  
And pickled pork they loaded she.

There was gorging Jack and guzzling Jimmy,  
And the youngest he was little Billee.

Now when they got as far as the Equator  
They'd nothing left but one split pea.

Says gorging Jack to guzzling Jimmy,  
'I am extremely hungaree.'

To gorging Jack says guzzling Jimmy,  
'We've nothing left; us must eat we.'

Says gorging Jack to guzzling Jimmy,  
'With one another we shouldn't agree!

'There's little Bill, he's young and tender,  
We're old and tough, so let's eat he.'

'Oh, Bill, we're going to kill and eat you,  
So undo the button of your chemie.'

When Bill received this information  
He used his pocket handkerchie.

‘First let me say my catechism,  
Which my poor mammy taught to me.’

‘Make haste, make haste,’ says guzzling Jimmy,  
While Jack pulled out his snickersnee.

So Billy went up to the main-top gallant mast,  
And down he fell on his bended knee.

He scarce had come to the twelfth commandment  
When up he jumps. ‘There’s land I see:

‘There’s Jerusalem and Madagascar,  
And North and South Amerikee:

‘There’s the British flag a-riding at anchor,  
With Admiral Napier, K.C.B.’

So when they got aboard of the Admiral’s,  
He hanged fat Jack and flogged Jimmee:

But as for little Bill, he made him  
The Captain of a Seventy-three.

### THE BALLAD OF BOUILLABAISSE

A STREET there is in Paris famous,  
For which no rhyme our language yields,  
Rue Neuve des Petits Champs its name is—  
The New Street of the Little Fields;  
And here’s an inn, not rich and splendid,  
But still in comfortable case;  
The which in youth I oft attended,  
To eat a bowl of Bouillabaisse.



This Bouillabaisse a noble dish is—  
 A sort of soup or broth, or brew,  
 Or hotchpotch of all sorts of fishes,  
 That Greenwich never could outdo ;  
 Green herbs, red peppers, mussels, saffern,  
 Soles, onions, garlic, roach, and dace ;  
 All these you eat at Terré's tavern,  
 In that one dish of Bouillabaisse.

Indeed, a rich and savoury stew 'tis ;  
 And true philosophers, methinks,  
 Who love all sorts of natural beauties,  
 Should love good victuals and good drinks.  
 And Cordelier or Benedictine  
 Might gladly, sure, his lot embrace,  
 Nor find a fast-day too afflicting  
 Which served him up a Bouillabaisse.

I wonder if the house still there is ?  
 Yes, here the lamp is, as before ;  
 The smiling red-cheeked écaillère is  
 Still opening oysters at the door.  
 Is Terré still alive and able ?  
 I recollect his droll grimace ;  
 He'd come and smile before your table,  
 And hope you liked your Bouillabaisse.

We enter—nothing 's changed or older.  
 'How 's Monsieur Terré, waiter, pray ?'  
 The waiter stares and shrugs his shoulder—  
 'Monsieur is dead this many a day.'  
 'It is the lot of saint and sinner,  
 So honest Terré 's run his race.'  
 'What will Monsieur require for dinner ?'  
 'Say, do you still cook Bouillabaisse ?'



‘Oh oui, Monsieur,’ ’s the waiter’s answer;  
‘Quel vin Monsieur désire-t-il?’  
‘Tell me a good one.’—‘That I can, Sir:  
The Chambertin with yellow seal.’  
‘So Terré ’s gone,’ I say, and sink in  
My old accustomed corner-place;  
‘He ’s done with feasting and with drinking,  
With Burgundy and Bouillabaisse.’

My old accustomed corner here is,  
The table still is in the nook;  
Ah! vanished many a busy year is,  
This well-known chair since last I took.  
When first I saw ye, *cari luoghi*,  
I’d scarce a beard upon my face,  
And now a grizzled, grim old foggy,  
I sit and wait for Bouillabaisse.

Where are you, old companions trusty,  
Of early days, here met to dine?  
Come, waiter! quick, a flagon crusty—  
I’ll pledge them in the good old wine.  
The kind old voices and old faces  
My memory can quick retrace;  
Around the board they take their places,  
And share the wine and Bouillabaisse.

There’s Jack has made a wondrous marriage;  
There ’s laughing Tom is laughing yet;  
There ’s brave Augustus drives his carriage;  
There ’s poor old Fred in the Gazette;  
On James’s head the grass is growing:  
Good Lord! the world has wagged apace  
Since here we set the Claret flowing,  
And drank, and ate the Bouillabaisse.

*cari luoghi*] dear scenes.

Ah me! how quick the days are flitting!

I mind me of a time that 's gone,  
 When here I'd sit, as now I'm sitting,  
 In this same place—but not alone.  
 A fair young form was nestled near me,  
 A dear, dear face looked fondly up,  
 And sweetly spoke and smiled to cheer me.  
 —There 's no one now to share my cup.

. . . . .

I drink it as the Fates ordain it.

Come, fill it, and have done with rhymes:  
 Fill up the lonely glass, and drain it  
 In memory of dear old times.  
 Welcome the wine, whate'er the seal is;  
 And sit you down and say your grace  
 With thankful heart, whate'er the meal is.  
 —Here comes the smoking Bouillabaisse!

## ROBERT BROWNING

1812-1889

### CAVALIER TUNES

#### (1) MARCHING ALONG

##### I

KENTISH Sir Byng stood for his King,  
 Bidding the crop-headed Parliament swing:  
 And, pressing a troop unable to stoop  
 And see the rogues flourish and honest folk droop,  
 Marched them along, fifty-score strong,  
 Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

## II

God for King Charles! Pym and such carles  
To the Devil that prompts 'em their treasonous  
parles!

Cavaliers, up! Lips from the cup,  
Hands from the pasty, nor bite take nor sup  
Till you're—

*(Chorus) Marching along, fifty-score strong,  
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.*

## III

Hampden to Hell, and his obsequies' knell  
Serve Hazelrig, Fiennes, and young Harry as well!  
England, good cheer! Rupert is near!  
Kentish and loyalists, keep we not here

*(Chorus) Marching along, fifty-score strong,  
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.*

## IV

Then, God for King Charles! Pym and his snarls  
To the Devil that pricks on such pestilent carles!  
Hold by the right, you double your might;  
So, onward to Nottingham, fresh for the fight,

*(Chorus) March we along, fifty-score strong,  
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song!*

## (2) GIVE A ROUSE

## I

KING CHARLES, and who'll do him right now?  
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?  
Give a rouse: here's, in Hell's despite now,  
King Charles!

## II

Who gave me the goods that went since ?  
 Who raised me the house that sank once ?  
 Who helped me to gold I spent since ?  
 Who found me in wine you drank once ?

*(Chorus) King Charles, and who'll do him right now?  
 King Charles, and who's ripe for fight  
 now?*

*Give a rouse: here's, in Hell's despite now,  
 King Charles!*

## III

To whom used my boy George quaff else,  
 By the old fool's side that begot him ?  
 For whom did he cheer and laugh else,  
 While Noll's damned troopers shot him ?

*(Chorus) King Charles, and who'll do him right now?  
 King Charles, and who's ripe for fight  
 now?*

*Give a rouse: here's, in Hell's despite now,  
 King Charles!*

## (3) BOOT AND SADDLE

## I

BOOT, saddle, to horse, and away!  
 Rescue my Castle, before the hot day  
 Brightens to blue from its silvery grey,

*(Chorus) Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!*

## II

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you'd say;  
 Many's the friend there, will listen and pray  
 'God's luck to gallants that strike up the lay—

*(Chorus) Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!*

## III

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,  
Flouts Castle Brancepeth the Roundheads' array:  
Who laughs, 'Good fellows ere this, by my fay,  
(Chorus) *Boot, saddle, to horse, and away?*'

## IV

Who? My wife Gertrude; that, honest and gay,  
Laughs when you talk of surrendering, 'Nay!  
I've better counsellors; what counsel they?  
(Chorus) *Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!*'

## THE LOST LEADER

## I

JUST for a handful of silver he left us,  
Just for a riband to stick in his coat—  
Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us,  
Lost all the others she lets us devote;  
They, with the gold to give, doled him out silver,  
So much was theirs who so little allowed:  
How all our copper had gone for his service!  
Rags—were they purple, his heart had been  
proud!  
We that had loved him so, followed him, honoured  
him,  
Lived in his mild and magnificent eye,  
Learned his great language, caught his clear accents,  
Made him our pattern to live and to die!  
Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us,  
Burns, Shelley, were with us,—they watch from  
their graves!  
He alone breaks from the van and the freemen,  
He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!

## II

We shall march prospering,—not thro' his presence;  
 Songs may inspirit us,—not from his lyre;  
 Deeds will be done,—while he boasts his quiescence,  
 Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire:  
 Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul more,  
 One task more declined, one more footpath untrod,  
 One more triumph for devils and sorrow for angels,  
 One wrong more to man, one more insult to God!  
 Life's night begins: let him never come back to us!  
 There would be doubt, hesitation and pain,  
 Forced praise on our part—the glimmer of twilight,  
 Never glad confident morning again!  
 Best fight on well, for we taught him,—strike  
     gallantly,  
 Menace our heart ere we master his own;  
 Then let him receive the new knowledge and wait us,  
 Pardoned in Heaven, the first by the throne!

‘HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM  
 GHENT TO AIX’

[16—]

## I

I SPRANG to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;  
 I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;  
 ‘Good speed!’ cried the watch, as the gate-bolts  
     undrew;  
 ‘Speed!’ echoed the wall to us galloping through;  
 Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,  
 And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

## II

Not a word to each other; we kept the great pace  
 Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our  
     place;

I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight,  
Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique  
right,  
Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,  
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

## III

'Twas moonset at starting; but while we drew near  
Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight dawned clear;  
At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see;  
At Düffeld, 'twas morning as plain as could be;  
And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard the  
half-chime,  
So Joris broke silence with, 'Yet there is time!'

## IV

At Aerschot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,  
And against him the cattle stood black every one,  
To stare thro' the mist at us galloping past,  
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,  
With resolute shoulders, each butting away  
The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray.

## V

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent  
back  
For my voice, and the other pricked out on his  
track;  
And one eye's black intelligence,—ever that glance  
O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance!  
And the thick heavy spume-flakes which aye and  
anon  
His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on.

## VI

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and cried Joris, 'Stay  
spur!

Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault's not in her,  
We'll remember at Aix'—for one heard the quick  
wheeze

Of her chest, saw the stretched neck and staggering  
knees,

And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank,  
As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

## VII

So we were left galloping, Joris and I,  
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky;  
The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,  
'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like  
chaff;

Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,  
And 'Gallop', gasped Joris, 'for Aix is in sight!'

## VIII

'How they'll greet us!'—and all in a moment his  
roan

Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead as a stone;  
And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight  
Of the news which alone could save Aix from her  
fate,

With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,  
And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

## IX

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster let fall,  
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,  
Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,  
Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without  
peer;



Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise,  
    bad or good,  
Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

## X

And all I remember is, friends flocking round  
As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground;  
And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,  
As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,  
Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)  
Was no more than his due who brought good news  
    from Ghent.

## THE LOST MISTRESS

## I

ALL's over, then: does truth sound bitter  
    As one at first believes?  
Hark, 'tis the sparrows' good-night twitter  
    About your cottage eaves!

## II

And the leaf-buds on the vine are woolly,  
    I noticed that, to-day;  
One day more bursts them open fully  
    —You know the red turns grey.

## III

To-morrow we meet the same then, dearest?  
    May I take your hand in mine?  
Mere friends are we,—well, friends the merest  
    Keep much that I'll resign:

## IV

For each glance of that eye so bright and black,  
    Though I keep with heart's endeavour,—  
Your voice, when you wish the snowdrops back,  
    Though it stay in my soul for ever!—

## V

Yet I will but say what mere friends say,  
Or only a thought stronger;  
I will hold your hand but as long as all may,  
Or so very little longer!

## A WOMAN'S LAST WORD

## I

LET'S contend no more, Love,  
Strive nor weep:  
All be as before, Love,  
—Only sleep!

## II

What so wild as words are?  
I and thou  
In debate, as birds are,  
Hawk on bough!

## III

See the creature stalking  
While we speak!  
Hush and hide the talking,  
Cheek on cheek!

## IV

What so false as truth is,  
False to thee?  
Where the serpent's tooth is,  
Shun the tree—

## V

Where the apple reddens  
Never pry—  
Lest we lose our Edens,  
Eve and I!

## VI

Be a god and hold me  
With a charm!  
Be a man and fold me  
With thine arm!

## VII

Teach me, only teach, Love!  
As I ought  
I will speak thy speech, Love,  
Think thy thought—

## VIII

Meet, if thou require it,  
Both demands,  
Laying flesh and spirit  
In thy hands.

## IX

That shall be to-morrow  
Not to-night:  
I must bury sorrow  
Out of sight:

## X

—Must a little weep, Love,  
(Foolish me!)  
And so fall asleep, Love,  
Loved by thee.

## HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD

## I

OH to be in England  
Now that April's there,  
And whoever wakes in England  
Sees, some morning, unaware,

That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf  
 Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,  
 While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough  
 In England—now!

## II

And after April, when May follows,  
 And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!  
 Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge  
 Leans to the field and scatters on the clover  
 Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—  
 That 's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice  
     over,  
 Lest you should think he never could recapture  
 The first fine careless rapture!  
 And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,  
 All will be gay when noontide wakes anew  
 The buttercups, the little children's dower  
 —Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

## HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM THE SEA

NOBLY, nobly Cape Saint Vincent to the North-  
     West died away;  
 Sunset ran, one glorious blood-red, reeking into  
     Cadiz Bay;  
 Bluish mid the burning water, full in face Trafalgar  
     lay;  
 In the dimmest North-East distance, dawned  
     Gibraltar grand and gray;  
 'Here and here did England help me: how can I  
     help England?'—say,  
 Whoso turns as I, this evening, turn to God to  
     praise and pray,  
 While Jove's planet rises yonder, silent over Africa.

## BY THE FIRE-SIDE

## I

How well I know what I mean to do

When the long dark Autumn evenings come,  
And where, my soul, is thy pleasant hue?

With the music of all thy voices, dumb  
In life's November too!

## II

I shall be found by the fire, suppose,

O'er a great wise book as beseemeth age,  
While the shutters flap as the cross-wind blows,  
And I turn the page, and I turn the page,  
Not verse now, only prose!

## III

Till the young ones whisper, finger on lip,

'There he is at it, deep in Greek:

Now, then, or never, out we slip

To cut from the hazels by the creek  
A mainmast for our ship!'

## IV

I shall be at it indeed, my friends!

Greek puts already on either side  
Such a branch-work forth as soon extends  
To a vista opening far and wide,  
And I pass out where it ends.

## V

The outside-frame, like your hazel trees

But the inside-archway narrows fast,  
And a rarer sort succeeds to these,

And we slope to Italy at last  
And youth, by green degrees.

## VI

I follow wherever I am led,  
Knowing so well the leader's hand:  
Oh, woman-country, wooed not wed,  
Loved all the more by earth's male-lands,  
Laid to their hearts instead!

## VII

Look at the ruined chapel again  
Half-way up in the Alpine gorge.  
Is that a tower, I point you plain,  
Or is it a mill, or an iron forge  
Breaks solitude in vain?

## VIII

A turn, and we stand in the heart of things;  
The woods are round us, heaped and dim;  
From slab to slab how it slips and springs—  
The thread of water single and slim,  
Through the ravage some torrent brings!

## IX

Does it feed the little lake below?  
That speck of white just on its marge  
Is Pella; see, in the evening-glow,  
How sharp the silver spear-heads charge  
When Alp meets Heaven in snow.

## X

On 'our other side is the straight-up rock  
And a path is kept 'twixt the gorge and it  
By boulder-stones where lichens mock  
The marks on a moth, and small ferns fit  
Their teeth to the polished block.

## XI

Oh, the sense of the yellow mountain-flowers,  
And the thorny balls, each three in one,  
The chestnuts throw on our path in showers!  
—For the drop of the woodland fruit's begun,  
These early November hours,

## XII

That crimson the creeper's leaf across  
Like a splash of blood, intense, abrupt,  
O'er a shield else gold from rim to boss  
And lay it for show on the fairy-cupped  
Elf-needed mat of moss,

## XIII

By the rose-flesh mushrooms, undivulged  
Last evening—nay, in to-day's first dew  
Yon sudden coral nipple bulged  
Where a freaked, fawn-coloured, flaky crew  
Of toad-stools peep indulged.

## XIV

And yonder, at foot of the fronting ridge  
That takes the turn to a range beyond,  
Is the chapel reached by the one-arched bridge  
Where the water is stopped in a stagnant pond  
Danced over by the midge.

## XV

The chapel and bridge are of stone alike,  
Blackish-grey and mostly wet;  
Cut hemp-stalks steep in the narrow dyke.  
See here again, how the lichens fret  
And the roots of the ivy strike!

## XVI

Poor little place, where its one priest comes  
On a festa-day, if he comes at all,  
To the dozen folk from their scattered homes,  
Gathered within that precinct small  
By the dozen ways one roams—

## XVII

To drop from the charcoal-burners' huts,  
Or climb from the hemp-dressers' low shed,  
Leave the grange where the woodman stores his nuts,  
Or the wattled cote where the fowlers spread  
Their gear on the rock's bare juts.

## XVIII

It has some pretension too, this front,  
With its bit of fresco half-moon-wise  
Set over the porch, Art's early wont:  
'Tis John in the Desert, I surmise,  
But has borne the weather's brunt—

## XIX

Not from the fault of the builder, though,  
For a pent-house properly projects  
Where three carved beams make a certain show,  
Dating—good thought of our architect's—  
'Five, six, nine, he lets you know.

## XX

And all day long a bird sings there,  
And a stray sheep drinks at the pond at times;  
The place is silent and aware;  
It has had its scenes, its joys and crimes,  
But that is its own affair.



## XXI

My perfect wife, my Leonor,  
Oh, heart my own, oh, eyes, mine too,  
Whom else could I dare look backward for,  
With whom beside should I dare pursue  
The path grey heads abhor?

## XXII

For it leads to a crag's sheer edge with them;  
Youth, flowery all the way, there stops—  
Not they; age threatens and they contemn,  
Till they reach the gulf wherein youth drops,  
One inch from our life's safe hem!

## XXIII

With me, youth led . . . I will speak now,  
No longer watch you as you sit  
Reading by fire-light, that great brow  
And the spirit-small hand propping it,  
Mutely, my heart knows how—

## XXIV

When, if I think but deep enough,  
You are wont to answer, prompt as rhyme;  
And you, too, find without a rebuff  
The response your soul seeks many a time  
Piercing its fine flesh-stuff.

## XXV

My own, confirm me! If I tread  
This path back, is it not in pride  
To think how little I dreamed it led  
To an age so blest that by its side  
Youth seems the waste instead?

## XXVI

My own, see where the years conduct!  
At first, 'twas something our two souls  
Should mix as mists do; each is sucked  
Into each now: on, the new stream rolls,  
Whatever rocks obstruct.

## XXVII

Think, when our one soul understands  
The great Word which makes all things new—  
When earth breaks up and Heaven expands—  
How will the change strike me and you  
In the House not made with hands?

## XXVIII

Oh, I must feel your brain prompt mine,  
Your heart anticipate my heart,  
You must be just before, in fine,  
See and make me see, for your part,  
New depths of the Divine!

## XXIX

But who could have expected this,  
When we two drew together first  
Just for the obvious human bliss,  
To satisfy life's daily thirst  
With a thing men seldom miss?

## XXX

Come back with me to the first of all,  
Let us lean and love it over again—  
Let us now forget and now recall,  
Break the rosary in a pearly rain,  
And gather what we let fall!

## XXXI

What did I say?—that a small bird sings  
All day long, save when a brown pair  
Of hawks from the wood float with wide wings  
Strained to a bell; 'gainst the noon-day glare  
You count the streaks and rings.

## XXXII

But at afternoon or almost eve  
'Tis better; then the silence grows  
To that degree, you half believe  
It must get rid of what it knows,  
Its bosom does so heave.

## XXXIII

Hither we walked, then, side by side,  
Arm in arm and cheek to cheek,  
And still I questioned or replied,  
While my heart, convulsed to really speak,  
Lay choking in its pride.

## XXXIV

Silent the crumbling bridge we cross,  
And pity and praise the chapel sweet,  
And care about the fresco's loss,  
And wish for our souls a like retreat,  
And wonder at the moss.

## XXXV

Stoop and kneel on the settle under—  
Look through the window's grated square:  
Nothing to see! for fear of plunder,  
The cross is down and the altar bare,  
As if thieves don't fear thunder.

## XXXVI

We stoop and look in through the grate,  
See the little porch and rustic door,  
Read duly the dead builder's date,  
Then cross the bridge we crossed before,  
Take the path again—but wait!

## XXXVII

Oh moment, one and infinite!  
The water slips o'er stock and stone;  
The West is tender, hardly bright:  
How grey at once is the evening grown—  
One star, the chrysolite!

## XXXVIII

We two stood there with never a third,  
But each by each, as each knew well:  
The sights we saw and the sounds we heard,  
The lights and the shades made up a spell  
Till the trouble grew and stirred.

## XXXIX

Oh, the little more, and how much it is!  
And the little less, and what worlds away!  
How a sound shall quicken content to bliss,  
Or a breath suspend the blood's best play,  
And life be a proof of this!

## XL

Had she willed it, still had stood the screen  
So slight, so sure, 'twixt my love and her:  
I could fix her face with a guard between,  
And find her soul as when friends confer,  
Friends—lovers that might have been.

## XLI

For my heart had a touch of the woodland-time,  
Wanting to sleep now over its best.  
Shake the whole tree in the summer-prime,  
But bring to the last leaf no such test:  
'Hold the last fast!' runs the rhyme.

## XLII

For a chance to make your little much,  
To gain a lover and lose a friend,  
Venture the tree and a myriad such,  
When nothing you mar but the year can mend!  
But a last leaf—fear to touch!

## XLIII

Yet should it unfasten itself and fall  
Eddying down till it find your face  
At some slight wind—(best chance of all)  
Be your heart henceforth its dwelling-place  
You trembled to forestall!

## XLIV

Worth how well, those dark grey eyes,  
—That hair so dark and dear, how worth  
That a man should strive and agonize,  
And taste a very hell on earth  
For the hope of such a prize!

## XLV

Oh, you might have turned and tried a man,  
Set him a space to weary and wear  
And prove which suited more your plan,  
His best of hope or his worst despair,  
Yet end as he began.

## XLVI

But you spared me this, like the heart you are,  
And filled my empty heart at a word.  
If you join two lives, there is oft a scar,  
They are one and one, with a shadowy third;  
One near one is too far.

## XLVII

A moment after, and hands unseen  
Were hanging the night around us fast;  
But we knew that a bar was broken between  
Life and life: we were mixed at last  
In spite of the mortal screen.

## XLVIII

The forests had done it; there they stood;  
We caught for a second the powers at play:  
They had mingled us so, for once and for good,  
Their work was done—we might go or stay,  
They relapsed to their ancient mood.

## XLIX

How the world is made for each of us!  
How all we perceive and know in it  
Tends to some moment's product thus,  
When a soul declares itself—to wit,  
By its fruit—the thing it does!

## L

Be Hate that fruit or Love that fruit,  
It forwards the General Deed of Man,  
And each of the Many helps to recruit  
The life of the race by a general plan;  
Each living his own, to boot.

## LI

I am named and known by that hour's feat,  
There took my station and degree:  
So grew my own small life complete  
As nature obtained her best of me—  
One born to love you, Sweet!

## LII

And to watch you sink by the fire-side now  
Back again, as you mutely sit  
Musing by fire-light, that great brow  
And the spirit-small hand propping it  
Yonder, my heart knows how!

## LIII

So, the earth has gained by one man more,  
And the gain of earth must be Heaven's gain too,  
And the whole is well worth thinking o'er  
When the autumn comes: which I mean to do  
One day, as I said before.

## LIFE IN A LOVE

ESCAPE me?

Never—

Beloved!

While I am I, and you are you,  
So long as the world contains us both,  
Me the loving and you the loth,  
While the one eludes, must the other pursue.  
My life is a fault at last, I fear:  
It seems too much like a fate, indeed  
Though I do my best I shall scarce succeed.  
But what if I fail of my purpose here?

It is but to keep the nerves at strain,  
To dry one's eyes and laugh at a fall,  
And baffled, get up and begin again,—  
So the chace takes up one's life, that's all.  
While, look but once from your farthest bound  
At me so deep in the dust and dark,  
No sooner the old hope drops to ground  
Than a new one, straight to the self-same mark,  
I shape me—  
Ever  
Removed!

## THE GUARDIAN-ANGEL

## A PICTURE AT FANO

## I

DEAR and great Angel, wouldst thou only leave  
That child, when thou hast done with him, for  
me!  
Let me sit all the day here, that when eve  
Shall find performed thy special ministry  
And time come for departure, thou, suspending  
Thy flight, may'st see another child for tending,  
Another still, to quiet and retrieve.

## II

Then I shall feel thee step one step, no more,  
From where thou standest now, to where I gaze,  
—And suddenly my head is covered o'er  
With those wings, white above the child who prays  
Now on that tomb—and I shall feel thee guarding  
Me, out of all the world; for me, discarding  
Yon Heaven thy home, that waits and opes its  
door!



## III

I would not look up thither past thy head  
Because the door opes, like that child, I know,  
For I should have thy gracious face instead,  
Thou bird of God! And wilt thou bend me low  
Like him, and lay, like his, my hands together,  
And lift them up to pray, and gently tether  
Me, as thy lamb there, with thy garment's spread?

## IV

If this was ever granted, I would rest  
My head beneath thine, while thy healing hands  
Close-covered both my eyes beside thy breast,  
Pressing the brain, which too much thought  
expands,  
Back to its proper size again, and smoothing  
Distortion down till every nerve had soothing,  
And all lay quiet, happy and supprest.

## V

How soon all worldly wrong would be repaired!  
I think how I should view the earth and skies  
And sea, when once again my brow was bared  
After thy healing, with such different eyes.  
O, world, as God has made it! all is beauty:  
And knowing this, is love, and love is duty.  
What further may be sought for or declared?

## VI

Guercino drew this angel I saw teach  
(Alfred, dear friend!)—that little child to pray,  
Holding the little hands up, each to each  
Pressed gently,—with his own head turned away  
Over the earth where so much lay before him  
Of work to do, though Heaven was opening o'er him,  
And he was left at Fano by the beach.

## VII

We were at Fano, and three times we went  
To sit and see him in his chapel there,  
And drink his beauty to our soul's content  
—My angel with me too: and since I care  
For dear Guercino's fame (to which in power  
And glory comes this picture for a dower,  
Fraught with a pathos so magnificent),

## VIII

And since he did not work so earnestly  
At all times, and has else endured some wrong—  
I took one thought his picture struck from me,  
And spread it out, translating it to song.  
My Love is here. Where are you, dear old friend?  
How rolls the Wairoa at your world's far end?  
This is Ancona, yonder is the sea.

## INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP

## I

You know, we French stormed Ratisbon:  
A mile or so away  
On a little mound, Napoleon  
Stood on our storming-day;  
With neck out-thrust, you fancy how,  
Legs wide, arms locked behind,  
As if to balance the prone brow  
Oppressive with its mind.

## II

Just as perhaps he mused 'My plans  
That soar, to earth may fall,  
Let once my army-leader Lannes  
Waver at yonder wall,'—

Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there flew  
A rider, bound on bound  
Full-galloping; nor bridle drew  
Until he reached the mound.

## III

Then off there flung in smiling joy,  
And held himself erect  
By just his horse's mane, a boy:  
You hardly could suspect—  
(So tight he kept his lips compressed,  
Scarce any blood came through)  
You looked twice ere you saw his breast  
Was all but shot in two.

## IV

'Well,' cried he, 'Emperor, by God's grace  
We've got you Ratisbon!  
The Marshal's in the market-place,  
And you'll be there anon  
To see your flag-bird flap his vans  
Where I, to heart's desire,  
Perched him!' The Chief's eye flashed; his plans  
Soared up again like fire.

## V

The Chief's eye flashed; but presently  
Softened itself, as sheathes  
A film the mother-eagle's eye  
When her bruised eaglet breathes:  
'You're wounded!' 'Nay,' his soldier's pride  
Touched to the quick, he said:  
'I'm killed, Sire!' And his chief beside,  
Smiling the boy fell dead.

## THE PATRIOT

## AN OLD STORY

## I

It was roses, roses, all the way,

With myrtle mixed in my path like mad:

The house-roofs seemed to heave and sway,

The church-spires flamed, such flags they had,

A year ago on this very day!

## II

The air broke into a mist with bells,

The old walls rocked with the crowd and cries.

Had I said, 'Good folk, mere noise repels—

But give me your sun from yonder skies!'

They had answered, 'And afterward, what else?'

## III

Alack, it was I who leaped at the sun

To give it my loving friends to keep!

Nought man could do, have I left undone:

And you see my harvest, what I reap

This very day, now a year is run.

## IV

There's nobody on the house-tops now—

Just a palsied few at the windows set;

For the best of the sight is, all allow,

At the Shambles' Gate—or, better yet,

By the very scaffold's foot, I trow.

## V

I go in the rain, and, more than needs,

A rope cuts both my wrists behind;

And I think, by the feel, my forehead bleeds,

For they fling, whoever has a mind,

Stones at me for my year's misdeeds.

## VI

Thus I entered, and thus I go!

In triumphs, people have dropped down dead.  
'Paid by the World,—what dost thou owe

Me?' God might question: now instead,  
'Tis God shall repay! I am safer so.

## MY LAST DUCHESS

## FERRARA

THAT's my last Duchess painted on the wall,  
Looking as if she were alive; I call  
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands  
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.  
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said  
'Frà Pandolf' by design, for never read  
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,  
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,  
But to myself they turned (since none puts by  
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)  
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,  
How such a glance came there; so, not the first  
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not  
Her husband's presence only, called that spot  
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps  
Frà Pandolf chanced to say 'Her mantle laps  
Over my Lady's wrist too much,' or 'Paint  
Must never hope to reproduce the faint  
Half-flush that dies along her throat'; such stuff  
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough  
For calling up that spot of joy. She had  
A heart . . . how shall I say? . . . too soon made glad,  
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er  
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.

Sir, 'twas all one! My favour at her breast,  
The dropping of the daylight in the West,  
The bough of cherries some officious fool  
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule  
She rode with round the terrace—all and each  
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,  
Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—good; but  
thanked

Somehow . . . I know not how . . . as if she ranked  
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name  
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame  
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill  
In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will  
Quite clear to such an one, and say 'Just this  
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,  
Or there exceed the mark'—and if she let  
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set  
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,  
—E'en then would be some stooping, and I chuse  
Never to stoop. Oh, Sir, she smiled, no doubt,  
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without  
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;  
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands  
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet  
The company below, then. I repeat,  
The Count your Master's known munificence  
Is ample warrant that no just pretence  
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;  
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed  
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go  
Together down, Sir! Notice Neptune, though,  
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,  
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me.

## THE BOY AND THE ANGEL

MORNING, evening, noon and night,  
'Praise God,' sang Theocrite.

Then to his poor trade he turned,  
By which the daily meal was earned.

Hard he laboured, long and well;  
O'er his work the boy's curls fell:

But ever, at each period,  
He stopped and sang, 'Praise God.'

Then back again his curls he threw,  
And cheerful turned to work anew.

Said Blaise, the listening monk, 'Well done;  
I doubt not thou art heard, my son:

As well as if thy voice to-day  
Were praising God, the Pope's great way.

This Easter Day, the Pope at Rome  
Praises God from Peter's dome.'

Said Theocrite, 'Would God that I  
Might praise Him, that great way, and die!'

Night passed, day shone,  
And Theocrite was gone.

With God a day endures alway,  
A thousand years are but a day.

God said in Heaven, 'Nor day nor night  
Now brings the voice of my delight.'

Then Gabriel, like a rainbow's birth,  
Spread his wings and sank to earth;

Entered in flesh, the empty cell,  
Lived there, and played the craftsman well;

And morning, evening, noon and night.  
Praised God in place of Theocrite.

And from a boy, to youth he grew:  
The man put off the stripling's hue:

The man matured and fell away  
Into the season of decay:

And ever o'er the trade he bent,  
And ever lived on earth content.

(He did God's will; to him, all one  
If on the earth or in the sun.)

God said, 'A praise is in mine ear;  
There is no doubt in it, no fear:

So sing old worlds, and so  
New worlds that from my footstool go.

Clearer loves sound other ways:  
I miss my little human praise.'

Then forth sprang Gabriel's wings, off fell  
The flesh disguise, remained the cell.

'Twas Easter Day: he flew to Rome,  
And paused above Saint Peter's dome.

In the tiring-room close by  
The great outer gallery,

With his holy vestments dight,  
Stood the new Pope, Theocrite:

And all his past career  
Came back upon him clear,

Since when, a boy, he plied his trade,  
Till on his life the sickness weighed;

And in his cell, when death drew near,  
An angel in a dream brought cheer:



And rising from the sickness drear  
He grew a priest, and now stood here.  
To the East with praise he turned,  
And on his sight the angel burned.  
'I bore thee from thy craftsman's cell,  
And set thee here; I did not well.  
Vainly I left my angel-sphere,  
Vain was thy dream of many a year.  
Thy voice's praise seemed weak; it dropped—  
Creation's chorus stopped!  
Go back and praise again  
The early way, while I remain.  
With that weak voice of our disdain,  
Take up Creation's pausing strain.  
Back to the cell and poor employ:  
Become the craftsman and the boy!  
Theocrite grew old at home;  
A new Pope dwelt in Peter's Dome.  
One vanished as the other died:  
They sought God side by side.

## THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

## A CHILD'S STORY

(WRITTEN FOR, AND INSCRIBED TO, W. M. THE YOUNGER)

## I

HAMELIN Town's in Brunswick,  
By famous Hanover city;  
The river Weser, deep and wide,  
Washes its wall on the southern side;  
A pleasanter spot you never spied;

But, when begins my ditty,  
Almost five hundred years ago,  
To see the townsfolk suffer so  
From vermin, was a pity.

## II

Rats!

They fought the dogs, and killed the cats,  
And bit the babies in the cradles,  
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,  
And licked the soup from the cooks' own ladles,  
Split open the kegs of salted sprats,  
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,  
And even spoiled the women's chats,  
By drowning their speaking  
With shrieking and squeaking  
In fifty different sharps and flats.

## III

At last the people in a body  
To the Town Hall came flocking:  
'Tis clear,' cried they, 'our Mayor's a noddy;  
And as for our Corporation—shocking  
To think we buy gowns lined with ermine  
For dolts that can't or won't determine  
What's best to rid us of our vermin!  
You hope, because you're old and obese,  
To find in the furry civic robe ease?  
Rouse up, Sirs! Give your brains a racking  
To find the remedy we're lacking,  
Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing!'  
At this the Mayor and Corporation  
Quaked with a mighty consternation.

## IV

An hour they sate in council,  
At length the Mayor broke silence:  
‘For a guilder I’d my ermine gown sell;  
I wish I were a mile hence!  
It’s easy to bid one rack one’s brain—  
I’m sure my poor head aches again  
I’ve scratched it so, and all in vain.  
Oh for a trap, a trap, a trap!’  
Just as he said this, what should hap  
At the chamber door but a gentle tap?  
‘Bless us,’ cried the Mayor, ‘what’s that?’  
(With the Corporation as he sat,  
Looking little though wondrous fat;  
Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister  
Than a too-long-opened oyster,  
Save when at noon his paunch grew mutinous  
For a plate of turtle green and glutinous)  
‘Only a scraping of shoes on the mat?  
Anything like the sound of a rat  
Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!’

## V

‘Come in!’—the Mayor cried, looking bigger:  
And in did come the strangest figure!  
His queer long coat from heel to head  
Was half of yellow and half of red;  
And he himself was tall and thin,  
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,  
And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,  
No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,  
But lips where smiles went out and in—  
There was no guessing his kith and kin!

And nobody could enough admire  
The tall man and his quaint attire:  
Quoth one: 'It's as my great-grandsire,  
Starting up at the Trump of Doom's tone,  
Had walked this way from his painted tomb-stone!'

## VI

He advanced to the council-table:  
And, 'Please your honours,' said he, 'I'm able,  
By means of a secret charm, to draw  
All creatures living beneath the sun,  
That creep or swim or fly or run,  
After me so as you never saw!  
And I chiefly use my charm  
On creatures that do people harm,  
The mole and toad and newt and viper;  
And people call me the Pied Piper.'  
(And here they noticed round his neck  
A scarf of red and yellow stripe,  
To match with his coat of the self-same cheque;  
And at the scarf's end hung a pipe;  
And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying  
As if impatient to be playing  
Upon this pipe, as low it dangled  
Over his vesture so old-fangled.)  
'Yet,' said he, 'poor piper as I am,  
In Tartary I freed the Cham,  
Last June, from his huge swarms of gnats;  
I eased in Asia the Nizam  
Of a monstrous brood of vampyre bats:  
And as for what your brain bewilders,  
If I can rid your town of rats  
Will you give me a thousand guilders?'  
'One? fifty thousand!'—was the exclamation  
Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

## VII

Into the street the Piper stept,  
Smiling first a little smile,  
As if he knew what magic slept  
In his quiet pipe the while;  
Then, like a musical adept,  
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,  
And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled  
Like a candle-flame where salt is sprinkled;  
And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,  
You heard as if an army muttered;  
And the muttering grew to a grumbling;  
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;  
And out of the houses the rats came tumbling.  
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,  
Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats,  
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,  
Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,  
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,  
Families by tens and dozens,  
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—  
Followed the Piper for their lives.  
From street to street he piped advancing,  
And step for step they followed dancing,  
Until they came to the river Weser  
Wherein all plunged and perished!  
—Save one who, stout as Julius Caesar,  
Swam across and lived to carry  
(As he, the manuscript he cherished)  
To Rat-land home his commentary:  
Which was, ‘At the first shrill notes of the pipe,  
I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,  
And putting apples, wondrous ripe,  
Into a cider-press’s gripe:

And a moving away of pickle-tub-boards,  
And a leaving ajar of conserve-cupboards,  
And a drawing the corks of train-oil-flasks,  
And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks;  
And it seemed as if a voice  
(Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery  
Is breathed) called out, Oh rats, rejoice!  
The world is grown to one vast drysaltery!  
So, munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,  
Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon!  
And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon,  
All ready staved, like a great sun shone  
Glorious scarce an inch before me,  
Just as methought it said, Come, bore me!  
—I found the Weser rolling o'er me.'

## VIII

You should have heard the Hamelin people  
Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple.  
'Go,' cried the Mayor, 'and get long poles!  
Poke out the nests and block up the holes!  
Consult with carpenters and builders,  
And leave in our town not even a trace  
Of the rats!'—when suddenly, up the face  
Of the Piper perked in the market-place,  
With a 'First, if you please, my thousand guilders!'

## IX

A thousand guilders! The Mayor looked blue;  
So did the Corporation too.  
For council dinners made rare havoc  
With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, Hock;  
And half the money would replenish  
Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish.

To pay this sum to a wandering fellow  
With a gipsy coat of red and yellow!  
'Beside,' quoth the Mayor with a knowing wink,  
Our business was done at the river's brink;  
We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,  
And what's dead can't come to life, I think.  
So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink  
From the duty of giving you something for drink,  
And a matter of money to put in your poke;  
But as for the guilders, what we spoke  
Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.  
Beside, our losses have made us thrifty.  
A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty!'

## X

The piper's face fell, and he cried,  
'No trifling! I can't wait, beside!  
I've promised to visit by dinner time  
Bagdat, and accept the prime  
Of the Head-Cook's pottage, all he's rich in,  
For having left, in the Caliph's kitchen,  
Of a nest of scorpions no survivor—  
With him I proved no bargain-driver,  
With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver!  
And folks who put me in a passion  
May find me pipe to another fashion.'

## XI

'How?' cried the Mayor, 'd'ye think I'll brook  
Being worse treated than a Cook?  
Insulted by a lazy ribald  
With idle pipe and vesture piebald?  
You threaten us, fellow? Do your worst,  
Blow your pipe there till you burst!'



## XII

Once more he stept into the street ;  
And to his lips again  
Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane ;  
And ere he blew three notes (such sweet  
Soft notes as yet musician's cunning  
Never gave the enraptured air)  
There was a rustling, that seemed like a bustling  
Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling,  
Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,  
Little hands clapping and little tongues chattering,  
And, like fowls in a farm-yard when barley is  
scattering,  
Out came the children running.  
All the little boys and girls,  
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,  
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,  
Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after  
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

## XIII

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood  
As if they were changed into blocks of wood,  
Unable to move a step, or cry  
To the children merrily skipping by—  
And could only follow with the eye  
That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.  
But how the Mayor was on the rack,  
And the wretched Council's bosoms beat,  
As the Piper turned from the High Street  
To where the Weser rolled its waters  
Right in the way of their sons and daughters!  
However he turned from South to West,  
And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed,  
And after him the children pressed ;



Great was the joy in every breast.  
‘He never can cross that mighty top!  
He’s forced to let the piping drop,  
And we shall see our children stop!’  
When, lo, as they reached the mountain’s side,  
A wondrous portal opened wide,  
As if a cavern had suddenly hollowed;  
And the Piper advanced and the children followed,  
And when all were in to the very last,  
The door in the mountain-side shut fast.  
Did I say all? No! One was lame,  
And could not dance the whole of the way;  
And in after years, if you would blame  
His sadness, he was used to say,—  
‘It’s dull in our town since my playmates left!  
I can’t forget that I’m bereft  
Of all the pleasant sights they see,  
Which the Piper also promised me.  
For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,  
Joining the town and just at hand,  
Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew,  
And flowers put forth a fairer hue,  
And everything was strange and new;  
The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,  
And their dogs outran our fallow deer,  
And honey-bees had lost their stings,  
And horses were born with eagles’ wings:  
And just as I became assured  
My lame foot would be speedily cured,  
The music stopped and I stood still,  
And found myself outside the Hill,  
Left alone against my will,  
To go now limping as before,  
And never hear of that country more!’

## XIV

Alas, alas for Hamelin!

There came into many a burgher's pate  
A text which says, that Heaven's Gate  
Opes to the Rich at as easy rate  
As the needle's eye takes the camel in!  
The Mayor sent East, West, North and South,  
To offer the Piper, by word of mouth,  
Wherever it was men's lot to find him,  
Silver and gold to his heart's content,  
If he'd only return the way he went,  
And bring the children behind him.  
But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavour,  
And Piper and dancers were gone for ever,  
They made a decree that lawyers never  
Should think their records dated duly  
If, after the day of the month and year,  
These words did not as well appear,  
'And so long after what happened here  
On the Twenty-second of Júlý,  
Thirteen hundred and seventy-six':  
And better in memory to fix  
The place of the children's last retreat,  
They called it the Pied Piper's Street—  
Where any one playing on pipe or tabor  
Was sure for the future to lose his labour.  
Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern  
To shock with mirth a street so solemn;  
But opposite the place of the cavern  
They wrote the story on a column,  
And on the great Church Window painted  
The same, to make the world acquainted  
How their children were stolen away;  
And there it stands to this very day.

And I must not omit to say  
 That in Transylvania there's a tribe  
 Of alien people that ascribe  
 The outlandish ways and dress  
 On which their neighbours lay such stress,  
 To their fathers and mothers having risen  
 Out of some subterraneous prison  
 Into which they were trepanned  
 Long time ago in a mighty band  
 Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,  
 But how or why, they don't understand.

## XV

So, Willy, let me and you be wipers  
 Of scores out with all men—especially pipers:  
 And, whether they pipe us free, from rats or from  
     mice,  
 If we've promised them aught, let us keep our  
     promise.

## A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL

[*Time*—Shortly after the revival of learning in Europe.]

LET us begin and carry up this corpse,  
     Singing together.  
 Leave we the common crofts, the vulgar thorpes,  
     Each in its tether  
 Sleeping safe on the bosom of the plain,  
     Cared-for till cock-crow:  
 Look out if yonder be not day again  
     Rimming the rock-row!  
 That's the appropriate country; there, man's  
     thought,  
     Rarer, intenser,  
 Self-gathered for an outbreak, as it ought,  
     Chafes in the censer!

Leave we the unlettered plain its herd and crop;  
    Seek we sepulture  
On a tall mountain, citied to the top,  
    Crowded with culture!  
All the peaks soar, but one the rest excels;  
    Clouds overcome it;  
No, yonder sparkle is the citadel's  
    Circling its summit!  
Thither our path lies; wind we up the heights:  
    Wait ye the warning?  
Our low life was the level's and the night's;  
    He's for the morning!  
Step to a tune, square chests, erect the head,  
    'Ware the beholders!  
This is our master, famous, calm, and dead,  
    Borne on our shoulders.

Sleep, crop and herd! sleep, darkling thorpe and  
    croft,  
    Safe from the weather!  
He, whom we convoy to his grave aloft,  
    Singing together,  
He was a man born with thy face and throat,  
    Lyric Apollo!  
Long he lived nameless: how should spring take note  
    Winter would follow?  
Till lo, the little touch, and youth was gone!  
    Cramped and diminished,  
Moaned he, 'New measures, other feet anon!  
    My dance is finished?'  
No, that's the world's way! (keep the mountain-side,  
    Make for the city,)  
He knew the signal, and stepped on with pride  
    Over men's pity;

Left play for work, and grappled with the world  
Bent on escaping:  
'What's in the scroll,' quoth he, 'thou keepest furled!  
Show me their shaping,  
Theirs, who most studied man, the bard and sage,—  
Give!'—So he gowned him,  
Straight got by heart that book to its last page:  
Learned, we found him!  
Yea, but we found him bald too—eyes like lead,  
Accents uncertain:  
'Time to taste life,' another would have said,  
'Up with the curtain!'—  
This man said rather, 'Actual life comes next?  
Patience a moment!  
Grant I have mastered learning's crabbed text,  
Still there's the comment.  
Let me know all! Prate not of most or least,  
Painful or easy:  
Even to the crumbs I'd fain eat up the feast,  
Ay, nor feel queasy!'  
Oh, such a life as he resolved to live,  
When he had learned it,  
When he had gathered all books had to give!  
Sooner, he spurned it.  
Image the whole, then execute the parts—  
Fancy the fabric  
Quite, ere you build, ere steel strike fire from quartz,  
Ere mortar dab brick!

(Here's the town-gate reached: there's the market-  
place  
Gaping before us.)  
Yea, this in him was the peculiar grace  
(Hearten our chorus)

That before living he'd learn how to live—

No end to learning:

Earn the means first—God surely will contrive

Use for our earning.

Others mistrust and say—‘But time escapes!

Live now or never!’

He said, ‘What’s time? leave Now for dogs and  
apes!

Man has Forever.’

Back to his book then: deeper drooped his head:

*Calculus* racked him:

Leaden before, his eyes grew dross of lead:

*Tussis* attacked him.

‘Now, Master, take a little rest!’—not he!

(Caution redoubled!

Step two a-breast, the way winds narrowly)

Not a whit troubled,

Back to his studies, fresher than at first,

Fierce as a dragon

He (soul-hydroptic with a sacred thirst)

Sucked at the flagon.

Oh, if we draw a circle premature,

Heedless of far gain,

Greedy for quick returns of profit, sure,

Bad is our bargain!

Was it not great? did not he throw on God,

(He loves the burthen)—

God’s task to make the heavenly period

Perfect the earthen?

Did not he magnify the mind, show clear

Just what it all meant?

He would not discount life, as fools do here,

Paid by instalment!

He ventured neck or nothing—Heaven's success  
Found, or earth's failure:  
'Wilt thou trust death or not?' He answered  
'Yes!  
Hence with life's pale lure!'  
That low man seeks a little thing to do,  
Sees it and does it:  
This high man, with a great thing to pursue,  
Dies ere he knows it.  
That low man goes on adding one to one,  
His hundred's soon hit:  
This high man, aiming at a million,  
Misses an unit.  
That, has the world here—should he need the next,  
Let the world mind him!  
This, throws himself on God, and unperplexed  
Seeking shall find Him.  
So, with the throttling hands of Death at strife,  
Ground he at grammar;  
Still, thro' the rattle, parts of speech were rife:  
While he could stammer  
He settled *Hoti's* business—let it be!—  
Properly based *Oun*—  
Gave us the doctrine of the enclitic *De*,  
Dead from the waist down.  
Well, here's the platform, here's the proper  
place.  
Hail to your purlieus,  
All ye highfliers of the feathered race,  
Swallows and curlews!  
Here's the top-peak! the multitude below  
Live, for they can, there.  
This man decided not to Live but Know—  
Bury this man there?

Here—here 's his place, where meteors shoot, clouds  
form,  
Lightnings are loosened,  
Stars come and go! let joy break with the storm,  
Peace let the dew send!  
Lofty designs must close in like effects:  
Loftily lying,  
Leave him—still loftier than the world suspects,  
Living and dying.

## PORPHYRIA'S LOVER

THE rain set early in to-night,  
The sullen wind was soon awake,  
It tore the elms-tops down for spite,  
And did its worst to vex the lake,  
I listened with heart fit to break.  
When glided in Porphyria; straight  
She shut the cold out and the storm,  
And kneeled and made the cheerless grate  
Blaze up, and all the cottage warm;  
Which done, she rose, and from her form  
Withdrew the dripping cloak and shawl,  
And laid her soiled gloves by, untied  
Her hat and let the damp hair fall,  
And, last, she sat down by my side  
And called me. When no voice replied,  
She put my arm about her waist,  
And made her smooth white shoulder bare,  
And all her yellow hair displaced,  
And, stooping, made my cheek lie there,  
And spread o'er all her yellow hair,  
Murmuring how she loved me—she  
Too weak, for all her heart's endeavour,



To set its struggling passion free  
From pride, and vainer ties dissever,  
And give herself to me for ever.  
But passion sometimes would prevail,  
Nor could to-night's gay feast restrain  
A sudden thought of one so pale  
For love of her, and all in vain;  
So, she was come through wind and rain.  
Be sure I looked up at her eyes  
Happy and proud; at last I knew  
Porphyria worshipped me; surprise  
Made my heart swell, and still it grew  
While I debated what to do.  
That moment she was mine, mine, fair,  
Perfectly pure and good: I found  
A thing to do, and all her hair  
In one long yellow string I wound  
Three times her little throat around,  
And strangled her. No pain felt she;  
I am quite sure she felt no pain.  
As a shut bud that holds a bee,  
I warily oped her lids; again  
Laughed the blue eyes without a stain.  
And I untightened next the tress  
About her neck; her cheek once more  
Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss:  
I propped her head up as before,  
Only this time *my* shoulder bore  
Her head, which droops upon it still:  
The smiling rosy little head,  
So glad it has its utmost will,  
That all it scorned at once is fled,  
And I, its love, am gained instead!  
Porphyria's love: she guessed not how

Her darling one wish would be heard.  
And thus we sit together now,  
And all night long we have not stirred,  
And yet God has not said a word!

## SONGS FROM 'PIPPA PASSES'

## (1)

The year 's at the spring,  
And day 's at the morn;  
Morning 's at seven;  
The hill-side 's dew-pearled;  
The lark 's on the wing;  
The snail 's on the thorn;  
God 's in his heaven—  
All 's right with the world!

## (2)

A king lived long ago,  
In the morning of the world,  
When earth was nigher heaven than now:  
And the king's locks curled  
Disparting o'er a forehead full  
As the milk-white space 'twixt horn and horn  
Of some sacrificial bull—  
Only calm as a babe new-born:  
For he was got to a sleepy mood,  
So safe from all decrepitude,  
Age with its bane, so sure gone by,  
(The Gods so loved him while he dreamed,)  
That, having lived thus long, there seemed  
No need the king should ever die.

Among the rocks his city was:  
Before his palace, in the sun,  
He sat to see his people pass,  
And judge them every one  
From its threshold of smooth stone.  
They haled him many a valley-thief  
Caught in the sheep-pens—robber-chief,  
Swarthy and shameless—beggar-cheat—  
Spy-prowler—or rough pirate found  
On the sea-sand left aground;  
And sometimes clung about his feet,  
With bleeding lip and burning cheek,  
A woman, bitterest wrong to speak  
Of one with sullen, thickset brows:  
And sometimes from the prison-house  
The angry priests a pale wretch brought,  
Who through some chink had pushed and pressed,  
On knees and elbows, belly and breast,  
Worm-like into the temple,—caught  
At last there by the very God,  
Who ever in the darkness strode  
Backward and forward, keeping watch  
O'er his brazen bowls, such rogues to catch!  
And these, all and every one,  
The king judged, sitting in the sun.

His councillors, on left and right,  
Looked anxious up,—but no surprise  
Disturbed the king's old smiling eyes,  
Where the very blue had turned to white.  
'Tis said, a Python scared one day  
The breathless city, till he came,  
With forky tongue and eyes on flame,  
Where the old king sat to judge alway;

But when he saw the sweepy hair,  
 Girt with a crown of berries rare  
 Which the God will hardly give to wear  
 To the maiden who singeth, dancing bare  
 In the altar-smoke by the pine-torch lights,  
 At his wondrous forest rites,—  
 Beholding this, he did not dare  
 Approach that threshold in the sun,  
 Assault the old king smiling there.  
 Such grace had kings when the world begun!

## (3)

You'll love me yet!—and I can tarry  
 Your love's protracted growing:  
 June reared that bunch of flowers you carry,  
 From seeds of April's sowing.  
 I plant a heartfull now: some seed  
 At least is sure to strike,  
 And yield—what you'll not pluck indeed,  
 Not love, but, may be, like!  
 You'll look at least on love's remains,  
 A grave's one violet:  
 Your look?—that pays a thousand pains.  
 What's death!—You'll love me yet!

## SONGS FROM 'PARACELSUS'

## (1)

HEAP cassia, sandal-buds and stripes  
 Of labdanum, and aloe-balls,  
 Smear'd with dull nard an Indian wipes  
 From out her hair: such balsam falls  
 Down seaside mountain pedestals,

From tree-tops where tired winds are fain,  
Spent with the vast and howling main,  
To treasure half their island-gain.

And strew faint sweetness from some old  
Egyptian's fine worm-eaten shroud  
Which breaks to dust when once unrolled;  
Or shredded perfume, like a cloud  
From closet long to quiet vowed,  
With moth and dropping arras hung,  
Mouldering her lute and books among,  
As when a queen, long dead, was young.

(2)

Over the seas our galleys went,  
With cleaving prows in order brave,  
To a speeding wind and a bounding wave,  
A gallant armament:  
Each bark built out of a forest-tree  
Left leafy and rough as first it grew,  
And nailed all over the gaping sides,  
Within and without, with black bull-hides,  
Seethed in fat and suppled in flame,  
To bear the playful billows' game:  
So, each good ship was rude to see,  
Rude and bare to the outward view,  
But each upbore a stately tent  
Where cedar-pales in scented row  
Kept out the flakes of the dancing brine,  
And an awning drooped the mast below,  
In fold on fold of the purple fine,  
That neither noontide nor star-shine

Nor moonlight cold which maketh mad,  
Might pierce the regal tenement.  
When the sun dawned, oh, gay and glad  
We set the sail and plied the oar;  
But when the night-wind blew like breath,  
For joy of one day's voyage more,  
We sang together on the wide sea,  
Like men at peace on a peaceful shore;  
Each sail was loosed to the wind so free,  
Each helm made sure by the twilight star,  
And in a sleep as calm as death,  
We, the voyagers from afar,  
Lay stretched along, each weary crew  
In a circle round its wondrous tent  
Whence gleamed soft light and curled rich scent,  
And with light and perfume, music too:  
So the stars wheeled round, and the darkness  
past,  
And at morn we started beside the mast,  
And still each ship was sailing fast!

Now, one morn, land appeared!—a speck  
Dim trembling betwixt sea and sky:  
'Avoid it,' cried our pilot, 'check  
The shout, restrain the eager eye!'  
But the heaving sea was black behind  
For many a night and many a day,  
And land, though but a rock, drew nigh;  
So, we broke the cedar-pales away,  
Let the purple awning flap in the wind,  
And a statue bright was on every deck!  
We shouted, every man of us,  
And steered right into the harbour thus,  
With pomp and paeon glorious.

A hundred shapes of lucid stone!

All day we built its shrine for each,  
A shrine of rock for every one,  
Nor paused we till in the westering sun

We sat together on the beach  
To sing because our task was done.  
When lo! what shouts and merry songs!  
What laughter all the distance stirs!  
A loaded raft with happy throngs  
Of gentle islanders!

'Our isles are just at hand,' they cried,  
'Like cloudlets faint in even sleeping;  
Our temple-gates are opened wide,  
'Our olive-groves thick shade are keeping  
For these majestic forms'—they cried.

Oh, then we awoke with sudden start  
From our deep dream, and knew, too late,  
How bare the rock, how desolate,  
Which had received our precious freight:

Yet we called out—'Depart!  
Our gifts, once given, must here abide.

Our work is done; we have no heart  
To mar our work,'—we cried.

## RABBI BEN EZRA

### I

GROW old along with me!  
The best is yet to be,  
The last of life, for which the first was made:  
Our times are in His hand  
Who saith 'A whole I planned,  
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be  
afraid!'

## II

Not that, amassing flowers,  
Youth sighed 'Which rose make ours,  
Which lily leave and then as best recall?'  
Not that, admiring stars,  
It yearned 'Nor Jove, nor Mars;  
Mine be some figured flame which blends, tran-  
scends them all!'

## III

Not for such hopes and fears  
Annulling youth's brief years,  
Do I remonstrate: folly wide the mark!  
Rather I prize the doubt  
Low kinds exist without,  
Finished and finite clods, untroubled by a spark.

## IV

Poor vaunt of life indeed,  
Were man but formed to feed  
On joy, to solely seek and find and feast:  
Such feasting ended, then  
As sure an end to men;  
Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the maw-  
crammed beast?

## V

Rejoice we are allied  
To That which doth provide  
And not partake, effect and not receive!  
A spark disturbs our clod;  
Nearer we hold of God  
Who gives, than of His tribes that take, I must  
believe.



## VI

Then, welcome each rebuff  
That turns earth's smoothness rough,  
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!  
Be our joys three-parts pain!  
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;  
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge  
the throe!

## VII

For thence,—a paradox  
Which comforts while it mocks,—  
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:  
What I aspired to be,  
And was not, comforts me:  
A brute I might have been, but would not sink i'  
the scale.

## VIII

What is he but a brute  
Whose flesh hath soul to suit,  
Whose spirit works lest arms and legs want play?  
To man, propose this test—  
Thy body at its best,  
How far can that project thy soul on its lone way?

## IX

Yet gifts should prove their use:  
I own the Past profuse  
Of power each side, perfection every turn:  
Eyes, ears took in their dole,  
Brain treasured up the whole;  
Should not the heart beat once 'How good to live  
and learn?'

## X

Not once beat 'Praise be Thine!  
I see the whole design,  
I, who saw Power, see now Love perfect too:  
Perfect I call Thy plan:  
Thanks that I was a man!  
Maker, remake, complete,—I trust what Thou  
shalt do!'

## XI

For pleasant is this flesh;  
Our soul in its rose-mesh  
Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns for rest:  
Would we some prize might hold  
To match those manifold  
Possessions of the brute,—gain most, as we did  
best!

## XII

Let us not always say  
'Spite of this flesh to-day  
I strove, made head, gained ground upon the  
whole!'  
As the bird wings and sings,  
Let us cry 'All good things  
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh  
helps soul!'

## XIII

Therefore I summon age  
To grant youth's heritage,  
Life's struggle having so far reached its term:  
Thence shall I pass, approved  
A man, for ay removed  
From the developed brute; a God though in the  
germ.

## XIV

And I shall thereupon  
Take rest, ere I be gone  
Once more on my adventure brave and new:  
Fearless and unperplexed,  
When I wage battle next,  
What weapons to select, what armour to indue.

## XV

Youth ended, I shall try  
My gain or loss thereby;  
Be the fire ashes, what survives is gold:  
And I shall weigh the same,  
Give life its praise or blame:  
Young, all lay in dispute; I shall know, being old.

## XVI

For note, when evening shuts,  
A certain moment cuts  
The deed off, calls the glory from the grey:  
A whisper from the west  
Shoots—'Add this to the rest,  
Take it and try its worth: here dies another day.'

## XVII

So, still within this life,  
Though lifted o'er its strife,  
Let me discern, compare, pronounce at last,  
'This rage was right i' the main,  
That acquiescence vain:  
The Future I may face now I have proved the Past.'

## XVIII

For more is not reserved  
To man, with soul just nerved  
To act to-morrow what he learns to-day:

Here, work enough to watch  
The Master work, and catch  
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true  
play.

## XIX

As it was better, youth  
Should strive, through acts uncouth,  
Toward making, than repose on aught found made;  
So, better, age, exempt  
From strife, should know, than tempt  
Further. Thou waitedst age; wait death nor be  
afraid!

## XX

Enough now, if the Right  
And Good and Infinite  
Be named here, as thou callest thy hand thine own,  
With knowledge absolute,  
Subject to no dispute  
From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee feel  
alone.

## XXI

Be there, for once and all,  
Severed great minds from small,  
Announced to each his station in the Past!  
Was I, the world arraigned,  
Were they, my soul disdained,  
Right? Let age speak the truth and give us peace  
at last!

## XXII

Now, who shall arbitrate?  
Ten men love what I hate,  
Shun what I follow, slight what I receive;

Ten who in ears and eyes  
Match me: we all surmise,  
They, this thing, and I, that: whom shall my soul  
believe?

## XXIII

Not on the vulgar mass  
Called 'work', must sentence pass,  
Things done, that took the eye and had the price;  
O'er which, from level stand,  
The low world laid its hand,  
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a  
trice:

## XXIV

But all, the world's coarse thumb  
And finger failed to plumb,  
So passed in making up the main account;  
All instincts immature,  
All purposes unsure,  
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's  
amount:

## XXV

Thoughts hardly to be packed  
Into a narrow act,  
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;  
All I could never be,  
All, men ignored in me,  
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher  
shaped.

## XXVI

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,  
That metaphor! and feel  
Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay,—

Thou, to whom fools propound,  
When the wine makes its round,  
'Since life fleets, all is change; the Past gone, seize  
to-day!'

## XXVII

Fool! All that is, at all,  
Lasts ever, past recall;  
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:  
What entered into thee,  
*That* was, is, and shall be:  
Time's wheel runs back or stops; Potter and clay  
endure.

## XXVIII

He fixed thee mid this dance  
Of plastic circumstance,  
This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst fain arrest:  
Machinery just meant  
To give thy soul its bent,  
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.

## XXIX

What though the earlier grooves  
Which ran the laughing loves  
Around thy base, no longer pause and press?  
What though, about thy rim,  
Skull-things in order grim  
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner stress?

## XXX

Look not thou down but up!  
To uses of a cup,  
The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,

The new wine's foaming flow,  
The Master's lips aglow!  
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what needst thou  
with earth's wheel?

## XXXI

But I need, now as then,  
Thee, God, who moulded men;  
And since, not even while the whirl was worst,  
Did I,—to the wheel of life  
With shapes and colours rife,  
Bound dizzily,—mistake my end, to slake Thy thirst:

## XXXII

So, take and use Thy work!  
Amend what flaws may lurk,  
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim!  
My times be in Thy hand!  
Perfect the cup as planned!  
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the  
same!

## PROSPICE

FEAR death?—to feel the fog in my throat,  
The mist in my face,  
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote  
I am nearing the place,  
The power of the night, the press of the storm,  
The post of the foe;  
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,  
Yet the strong man must go:  
For the journey is done and the summit attained,  
And the barriers fall,  
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,  
The reward of it all.

I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,  
 The best and the last!  
 I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and  
 forbore,  
 And bade *mé* creep past.  
 No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers  
 The heroes of old,  
 Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears  
 Of pain, darkness and cold.  
 For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,  
 The black minute's at end,  
 And the element's rage, the fiend-voices that rave,  
 Shall dwindle, shall blend,  
 Shall change, shall become first a peace, then a joy,  
 Then a light, then thy breast,  
 O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,  
 And with God be the rest!

## YOUTH AND ART

### I

It once might have been, once only:  
 We lodged in a street together,  
 You, a sparrow on the housetop lonely,  
 I, a lone she-bird of his feather.

### II

Your trade was with sticks and clay,  
 You thumbed, thrust, patted and polished,  
 Then laughed 'They will see some day  
 Smith made, and Gibson demolished.'

### III

My business was song, song, song;  
 I chirped, cheeped, trilled and twittered,  
 'Kate Brown's on the boards ere long,  
 And Grisi's existence embittered!'



## IV

I earned no more by a warble  
Than you by a sketch in plaster;  
You wanted a piece of marble,  
I needed a music-master.

## V

We studied hard in our styles,  
Chipped each at a crust like Hindoos,  
For air, looked out on the tiles,  
For fun, watched each other's windows.

## VI

You lounged, like a boy of the South,  
Cap and blouse—nay, a bit of beard too;  
Or you got it, rubbing your mouth  
With fingers the clay adhered to.

## VII

And I—soon managed to find  
Weak points in the flower-fence facing,  
Was forced to put up a blind  
And be safe in my corset-lacing.

## VIII

No harm! It was not my fault  
If you never turned your eyes' tail up,  
As I shook upon E *in alt*,  
Or ran the chromatic scale up:

## IX

For spring bade the sparrows pair,  
And the boys and girls gave guesses,  
And stalls in our street looked rare  
With bulrush and watercresses.

## X

Why did not you pinch a flower  
In a pellet of clay and fling it?  
Why did not I put a power  
Of thanks in a look, or sing it?

## XI

I did look, sharp as a lynx,  
(And yet the memory rankles)  
When models arrived, some minx  
Tripped up-stairs, she and her ankles.

## XII

But I think I gave you as good!  
'That foreign fellow,—who can know  
How she pays, in a playful mood,  
For his tuning her that piano?'

## XIII

Could you say so, and never say  
'Suppose we join hands and fortunes,  
And I fetch her from over the way,  
Her, piano, and long tunes and short tunes?'

## XIV

No, no: you would not be rash,  
Nor I rasher and something over:  
You've to settle yet Gibson's hash,  
And Grisi yet lives in clover.

## XV

But you meet the Prince at the Board,  
I'm queen myself at *bals-paré*,  
I've married a rich old lord,  
And you're dubbed knight and an R.A.

## XVI

Each life 's unfulfilled, you see;  
It hangs still, patchy and scrappy:  
We have not sighed deep, laughed free,  
Starved, feasted, despaired,—been happy.

## XVII

And nobody calls you a dunce,  
And people suppose me clever:  
This could but have happened once,  
And we missed it, lost it for ever.

## FROM 'THE RING AND THE BOOK'

## (1)

O LYRIC Love, half-angel and half-bird  
And all a wonder and a wild desire,—  
Boldest of hearts that ever braved the sun,  
Took sanctuary within the holier blue,  
And sang a kindred soul out to his face,—  
Yet human at the red-ripe of the heart—  
When the first summons from the darkling earth  
Reached thee amid thy chambers, blanched their  
blue,  
And bared them of the glory—to drop down,  
To toil for man, to suffer or to die,—  
This is the same voice: can thy soul know change?  
Hail then, and hearken from the realms of help!  
Never may I commence my song, my due  
To God who best taught song by gift of thee,  
Except with bent head and beseeching hand—  
That still, despite the distance and the dark,  
What was, again may be; some interchange  
Of grace, some splendour once thy very thought,  
Some benediction anciently thy smile:

—Never conclude, but raising hand and head  
 Thither where eyes, that cannot reach, yet yearn  
 For all hope, all sustainment, all reward,  
 Their utmost up and on,—so blessing back  
 In those thy realms of help, that heaven thy home,  
 Some whiteness which, I judge, thy face makes proud,  
 Some wanness where, I think, thy foot may fall!  
Bk. I.

(2) FROM THE POPE'S SPEECH

O THOU,—as represented here to me  
 In such conception as my soul allows,—  
 Under Thy measureless my atom width!—  
 Man's mind—what is it but a convex glass  
 Wherein are gathered all the scattered points  
 Picked out of the immensity of sky,  
 To reunite there, be our heaven on earth,  
 Our known unknown, our God revealed to man?  
 Existent somewhere, somehow, as a whole;  
 Here, as a whole proportioned to our sense,—  
 There, (which is nowhere, speech must babble thus!)  
 In the absolute immensity, the whole  
 Appreciable solely by Thyself,—  
 Here, by the little mind of man, reduced  
 To littleness that suits his faculty,  
 Appreciable too in the degree;  
 Between Thee and ourselves—nay even, again,  
 Below us, to the extreme of the minute,  
 Appreciable by how many and what diverse  
 Modes of the life Thou makest be! (why live  
 Except for love,—how love unless they know?)  
 Each of them, only filling to the edge,  
 Insect or angel, his just length and breadth,  
 Due facet of reflection,—full, no less,

Angel or insect, as Thou framedst things,—  
I it is who have been appointed here  
To represent Thee, in my turn, on earth,  
Just as, if new philosophy know aught,  
This one earth, out of all the multitude  
Of peopled worlds, as stars are now supposed,—  
Was chosen, and no sun-star of the swarm,  
For stage and scene of Thy transcendent act  
Beside which even the creation fades  
Into a puny exercise of power.  
Choice of the world, choice of the thing I am,  
Both emanate alike from the dread play  
Of operation outside this our sphere  
Where things are classed and counted small or  
great,—

Incomprehensibly the choice is Thine!  
I therefore bow my head and take Thy place.  
There is, beside the works, a tale of Thee  
In the world's mouth which I find credible:  
I love it with my heart: unsatisfied,  
I try it with my reason, nor discept  
From any point I probe and pronounce sound.  
Mind is not matter nor from matter, but  
Above,—leave matter then, proceed with mind:  
Man's be the mind recognized at the height,—  
Leave the inferior minds and look at man.  
Is he the strong, intelligent and good  
Up to his own conceivable height? Nowise.  
Enough o' the low,—soar the conceivable height,  
Find cause to match the effect in evidence,  
Works in the world, not man's, then God's; leave  
man:

Conjecture of the worker by the work:  
Is there strength there?—enough: intelligence?

Ample: but goodness in a like degree?  
Not to the human eye in the present state,  
This isoscele deficient in the base.  
What lacks, then, of perfection fit for God  
But just the instance which this tale supplies  
Of love without a limit? So is strength,  
So is intelligence; then love is so,  
Unlimited in its self-sacrifice:  
Then is the tale true and God shows complete.  
Beyond the tale, I reach into the dark,  
Feel what I cannot see, and still faith stands:  
I can believe this dread machinery  
Of sin and sorrow, would confound me else,  
Devised,—all pain, at most expenditure  
Of pain by Who devised pain,—to evolve  
By new machinery in counterpart,  
The moral qualities of man—how else?—  
To make him love in turn and be beloved,  
Creative and self-sacrificing too,  
And thus eventually God-like, (ay,  
'I have said ye are Gods,'—shall it be said for nought?)  
Enable man to wring, from out all pain,  
All pleasure for a common heritage  
To all eternity: this may be surmised,  
The other is revealed,—whether a fact,  
Absolute, abstract, independent truth,  
Historic, not reduced to suit man's mind,—  
Or only truth reverberate, changed, made pass  
A spectrum into mind, the narrow eye,—  
The same and not the same, else unconceived—  
Though quite conceivable to the next grade  
Above it in intelligence,—as truth  
Easy to man were blindness to the beast  
By parity of procedure,—the same truth

In a new form, but changed in either case:  
 What matter so the intelligence be filled?  
 To the child, the sea is angry, for it roars;  
 Frost bites, else why the tooth-like fret on face?  
 Man makes acoustics deal with the sea's wrath,  
 Explains the choppy cheek by chymic law,—  
 To both, remains one and the same effect  
 On drum of ear and root of nose, change cause  
 Never so thoroughly: so our heart be struck,  
 What care I,—by God's gloved hand or the bare?  
 Nor do I much perplex me with aught hard,  
 Dubious in the transmitting of the tale,—  
 No, nor with certain riddles set to solve.  
 This life is training and a passage; pass,—  
 Still, we march over some flat obstacle  
 We made give way before us; solid truth  
 In front of it, were motion for the world?  
 The moral sense grows but by exercise.  
 'Tis even as man grew probatively  
 Initiated in Godship, set to make  
 A fairer moral world than this he finds,  
 Guess now what shall be known hereafter. Thus,  
 O' the present problem: as we see and speak,  
 A faultless creature is destroyed, and sin  
 Has had its way i' the world where God should rule.  
Bk. X.

WILLIAM EDMONDSTOUNE AYTOUN

1813-1865

THE EXECUTION OF MONTROSE

I

COME hither, Evan Cameron!

Come, stand beside my knee—

I hear the river roaring down

Towards the wintry sea.

There's shouting on the mountain-side,  
There's war within the blast—  
Old faces look upon me,  
Old forms go trooping past:  
I hear the pibroch wailing  
Amidst the din of fight,  
And my dim spirit wakes again  
Upon the verge of night.

## II

'Twas I that led the Highland host  
Through wild Lochaber's snows,  
What time the plaided clans came down  
To battle with Montrose.  
I've told thee how the Southrons fell  
Beneath the broad claymore,  
And how we smote the Campbell clan  
By Inverlochy's shore.  
I've told thee how we swept Dundee,  
And tamed the Lindsays' pride;  
But never have I told thee yet  
How the great Marquis died.

## III

A traitor sold him to his foes;  
O deed of deathless shame!  
I charge thee, boy, if e'er thou meet  
With one of Assynt's name—  
Be it upon the mountain's side,  
Or yet within the glen,  
Stand he in martial gear alone,  
Or backed by armèd men—



Face him, as thou wouldst face the man  
Who wronged thy sire's renown;  
Remember of what blood thou art,  
And strike the caitiff down!

## IV

They brought him to the Watergate,  
Hard bound with hempen span,  
As though they held a lion there,  
And not a fenceless man.  
They set him high upon a cart—  
The hangman rode below—  
They drew his hands behind his back,  
And bared his noble brow.  
Then, as a hound is slipped from leash,  
They cheered, the common throng,  
And blew the note with yell and shout,  
And bade him pass along.

## V

It would have made a brave man's heart  
Grow sad and sick that day,  
To watch the keen malignant eyes  
Bent down on that array.  
There stood the Whig west-country lords  
In balcony and bow,  
There sat their gaunt and withered dames,  
And their daughters all a-row.  
And every open window  
Was full as full might be  
With black-robed Covenanting carles,  
That goodly sport to see!

fenceless] defenceless.

carles] rustics.

## VI

But when he came, though pale and wan,  
He looked so great and high,  
So noble was his manly front,  
So calm his steadfast eye;—  
The rabble rout forbore to shout,  
And each man held his breath,  
For well they knew the hero's soul  
Was face to face with death.  
And then a mournful shudder  
Through all the people crept,  
And some that came to scoff at him  
Now turned aside and wept.

## VII

But onwards—always onwards,  
In silence and in gloom,  
The dreary pageant laboured,  
Till it reached the house of doom.  
Then first a woman's voice was heard  
In jeer and laughter loud,  
And an angry cry and a hiss arose  
From the heart of the tossing crowd:  
Then, as the Graeme looked upwards,  
He saw the ugly smile  
Of him who sold his king for gold—  
The master-fiend Argyle!

## VIII

The Marquis gazed a moment,  
And nothing did he say,  
But the cheek of Argyle grew ghastly pale,  
And he turned his eyes away.

The painted harlot by his side,  
She shook through every limb,  
For a roar like thunder swept the street,  
And hands were clenched at him;  
And a Saxon soldier cried aloud,  
‘Back, coward, from thy place!  
For seven long years thou hast not dared  
To look him in the face.’

## IX

Had I been there with sword in hand,  
And fifty Camerons by,  
That day through high Dunedin’s streets  
Had pealed the slogan-cry.  
Not all their troops of trampling horse,  
Nor might of mailed men—  
Not all the rebels in the south  
Had borne us backwards then!  
Once more his foot on Highland heath  
Had trod as free as air,  
Or I, and all who bore my name,  
Been laid around him there!

## X

It might not be. They placed him next  
Within the solemn hall,  
Where once the Scottish kings were throned  
Amidst their nobles all.  
But there was dust of vulgar feet  
On that polluted floor,  
And perjured traitors filled the place  
Where good men sate before.

With savage glee came Warristoun  
To read the murderous doom;  
And then uprose the great Montrose  
In the middle of the room.

## XI

'Now, by my faith as belted knight,  
And by the name I bear,  
And by the bright Saint Andrew's cross  
That waves above us there—  
Yea, by a greater, mightier oath—  
And oh, that such should be!—  
By that dark stream of royal blood  
That lies 'twixt you and me—  
I have not sought in battle-field  
A wreath of such renown,  
Nor dared I hope on my dying day  
To win the martyr's crown!

## XII

'There is a chamber far away  
Where sleep the good and brave,  
But a better place ye have named for me  
Than by my father's grave.  
For truth and right, 'gainst treason's might,  
This hand hath always striven,  
And ye raise it up for a witness still  
In the eye of earth and heaven.  
Then nail my head on yonder tower—  
Give every town a limb—  
And God who made shall gather them:  
I go from you to Him!'

## XIII

The morning dawned full darkly,  
The rain came flashing down,  
And the jagged streak of the levin-bolt  
Lit up the gloomy town:  
The thunder crashed across the heaven,  
The fatal hour was come;  
Yet aye broke in with muffled beat  
The 'larum of the drum.  
There was madness on the earth below  
And anger in the sky,  
And young and old, and rich and poor,  
Came forth to see him die.

## XIV

Ah, God! that ghastly gibbet!  
How dismal 'tis to see  
The great tall spectral skeleton,  
The ladder, and the tree!  
Hark! hark! it is the clash of arms—  
The bells begin to toll—  
'He is coming! he is coming!  
God's mercy on his soul!'  
One last long peal of thunder—  
The clouds are cleared away,  
And the glorious sun once more looks down  
Amidst the dazzling day.

## XV

'He is coming! he is coming!'  
Like a bridegroom from his room,  
Came the hero from his prison  
To the scaffold and the doom.

levin-bolt] lightning.

There was glory on his forehead,  
 There was lustre in his eye,  
 And he never walked to battle  
 More proudly than to die:  
 There was colour in his visage,  
 Though the cheeks of all were wan,  
 And they marvelled as they saw him pass,  
 That great and goodly man!

## XVI

He mounted up the scaffold,  
 And he turned him to the crowd;  
 But they dared not trust the people,  
 So he might not speak aloud.  
 But he looked upon the heavens,  
 And they were clear and blue,  
 And in the liquid ether  
 The eye of God shone through!  
 Yet a black and murky battlement  
 Lay resting on the hill,  
 As though the thunder slept within—  
 All else was calm and still.

## XVII

The grim Geneva ministers  
 With anxious scowl drew near,  
 As you have seen the ravens flock  
 Around the dying deer.  
 He would not deign them word nor sign,  
 But alone he bent the knee;  
 And veiled his face for Christ's dear grace  
 Beneath the gallows-tree.

Then radiant and serene he rose,  
 And cast his cloak away:  
 For he had ta'en his latest look  
 Of earth and sun and day.

## XVIII

A beam of light fell o'er him,  
 Like a glory round the shriven,  
 And he climbed the lofty ladder  
 As it were the path to heaven.  
 Then came a flash from out the cloud,  
 And a stunning thunder-roll;  
 And no man dared to look aloft,  
 For fear was on every soul.  
 There was another heavy sound,  
 A hush and then a groan;  
 And darkness swept across the sky—  
 The work of death was done!

## EMILY JANE BRONTË

1818-1848

## REMEMBRANCE

COLD in the earth—and the deep snow piled above  
 thee,

Far, far removed, cold in the dreary grave!  
 Have I forgot, my only Love, to love thee,  
 Severed at last by Time's all-severing wave?

Now, when alone, do my thoughts no longer hover  
 Over the mountains, on that northern shore,  
 Resting their wings where heath and fern-leaves  
 cover

Thy noble heart for ever, ever more?

Cold in the earth—and fifteen wild Decembers  
From those brown hills have melted into spring:  
Faithful, indeed, is the spirit that remembers  
After such years of change and suffering!

Sweet Love of youth, forgive, if I forget thee,  
While the world's tide is bearing me along;  
Other desires and other hopes beset me,  
Hopes which obscure, but cannot do thee wrong!

No later light has lightened up my heaven,  
No second morn has ever shone for me;  
All my life's bliss from thy dear life was given,  
All my life's bliss is in the grave with thee.

But, when the days of golden dreams had perished,  
And even Despair was powerless to destroy;  
Then did I learn how existence could be cherished,  
Strengthened and fed without the aid of joy.

Then did I check the tears of useless passion—  
Weaned my young soul from yearning after thine;  
Sternly denied its burning wish to hasten  
Down to that tomb already more than mine.

And, even yet, I dare not let it languish,  
Dare not indulge in memory's rapturous pain;  
Once drinking deep of that divinest anguish,  
How could I seek the empty world again?

#### THE OLD STOIC

RICHES I hold in light esteem,  
And Love I laugh to scorn;  
And lust of fame was but a dream,  
That vanished with the morn:



And if I pray, the only prayer  
That moves my lips for me  
Is, 'Leave the heart that now I bear,  
And give me liberty!'

Yes, as my swift days near their goal,  
'Tis all that I implore;  
In life and death a chainless soul,  
With courage to endure.

### MY LADY'S GRAVE

THE linnet in the rocky dells,  
The moor-lark in the air,  
The bee among the heather bells  
That hide my lady fair:

The wild deer browse above her breast;  
The wild birds raise their brood;  
And they, her smiles of love caressed,  
Have left her solitude!

I ween that when the grave's dark wall  
Did first her form retain,  
They thought their hearts could ne'er recall  
The light of joy again.

They thought the tide of grief would flow  
Unchecked through future years;  
But where is all their anguish now,  
And where are all their tears?

Well, let them fight for honour's breath,  
Or pleasure's shade pursue—  
The dweller in the land of death  
Is changed and careless too.

And, if their eyes should watch and weep  
Till sorrow's source were dry,  
She would not, in her tranquil sleep,  
Return a single sigh!

Blow, west wind, by the lonely mound,  
And murmur, summer streams—  
There is no need of other sound  
To soothe my lady's dreams.

## LAST LINES

No coward soul is mine,  
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere:  
I see Heaven's glories shine,  
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

O God within my breast,  
Almighty, ever-present Deity!  
Life—that in me has rest,  
As I—undying Life—have power in Thee!

Vain are the thousand creeds  
That move men's hearts: unutterably vain;  
Worthless as withered weeds,  
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main,

To waken doubt in one  
Holding so fast by Thine infinity;  
So surely anchored on  
The steadfast rock of immortality.

With wide-embracing love  
Thy spirit animates eternal years,  
Pervades and broods above,  
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears.

Though earth and man were gone,  
And suns and universes ceased to be,  
And Thou were left alone,  
Every existence would exist in Thee.

There is not room for Death,  
Nor atom that his might could render void:  
Thou—THOU art Being and Breath,  
And what THOU art may never be destroyed.

### A DEATH SCENE

‘O DAY! he cannot die  
When thou so fair art shining!  
O Sun, in such a glorious sky,  
So tranquilly declining;

‘He cannot leave thee now,  
While fresh west winds are blowing,  
And all around his youthful brow  
Thy cheerful light is glowing!

‘Edward, awake, awake—  
The golden evening gleams  
Warm and bright on Arden’s lake—  
Arouse thee from thy dreams!

‘Beside thee, on my knee,  
My dearest friend, I pray  
That thou, to cross the eternal sea,  
Wouldst yet one hour delay:

‘I hear its billows roar—  
I see them foaming high;  
But no glimpse of a further shore  
Has blest my straining eye.

'Believe not what they urge  
Of Eden isles beyond;  
Turn back, from that tempestuous surge,  
To thy own native land.

'It is not death, but pain  
That struggles in thy breast—  
Nay, rally, Edward, rouse again;  
I cannot let thee rest!'

One long look, that sore reproved me  
For the woe I could not bear—  
One mute look of suffering moved me  
To repent my useless prayer:

And, with sudden check, the heaving  
Of distraction passed away;  
Not a sign of further grieving  
Stirred my soul that awful day.

Paled, at length, the sweet sun setting;  
Sunk to peace the twilight breeze:  
Summer dew fell softly, wetting  
Glen, and glade, and silent trees.

Then his eyes began to weary,  
Weighed beneath a mortal sleep;  
And their orbs grew strangely dreary,  
Clouded, even as they would weep.

But they wept not, but they changed not,  
Never moved, and never closed;  
Troubled still, and still they ranged not—  
Wandered not, nor yet reposed!

So I knew that he was dying—  
Stooped, and raised his languid head;  
Felt no breath, and heard no sighing,  
So I knew that he was dead.

## THE PRISONER

## A FRAGMENT

IN the dungeon-crypts idly did I stray,  
Reckless of the lives wasting there away;  
‘Draw the ponderous bars! open, Warder stern!’  
He dared not say me nay—the hinges harshly turn.

‘Our guests are darkly lodged,’ I whispered, gazing  
through

The vault, whose grated eye showed heaven more  
grey than blue;

• (This was when glad Spring laughed in awaking  
pride;)

‘Aye, darkly lodged enough!’ returned my sullen  
guide.

Then, God forgive my youth; forgive my careless  
tongue;

I scoffed, as the chill chains on the damp flagstones  
rung:

‘Confined in triple walls, art thou so much to fear,  
That we must bind thee down and clench thy  
fetters here?’

The captive raised her face; it was as soft and mild  
As sculptured marble saint, or slumbering un-  
weaned child;

It was so soft and mild, it was so sweet and fair,  
Pain could not trace a line, nor grief a shadow  
there!

The captive raised her hand and pressed it to her  
brow;

‘I have been struck,’ she said, ‘and I am suffering  
now;

Yet these are little worth, your bolts and irons  
strong;

And, were they forged in steel, they could not hold  
me long.'

Hoarse laughed the jailor grim: 'Shall I be won to  
hear;

Dost think, fond, dreaming wretch, that *I* shall  
grant thy prayer?

Or, better still, wilt melt my master's heart with  
groans?

Ah! sooner might the sun thaw down these granite  
stones.

'My master's voice is low, his aspect bland and  
kind,

But hard as hardest flint the soul that lurks behind;  
And I am rough and rude, yet not more rough to see  
Than is the hidden ghost that has its home in me.'

About her lips there played a smile of almost scorn.

'My friend,' she gently said, 'you have not heard  
me mourn;

When you my kindred's lives, *my* lost life, can restore,  
Then may I weep and sue,—but never, friend,  
before!

'Still, let my tyrants know, I am not, doomed to  
wear

Year after year in gloom, and desolate despair;  
A messenger of Hope comes every night to me,  
And offers for short life, eternal liberty.

'He comes with western winds, with evening's  
wandering airs,

With that clear dusk of heaven that brings the  
thickest stars.

Winds take a pensive tone, and stars a tender fire,  
And visions rise, and change, that kill me with  
desire.

‘Desire for nothing known in my maturer years,  
When joy grew mad with awe, at counting future  
tears.

When, if my spirit’s sky was full of flashes warm,  
I knew not whence they came, from sun or thunder-  
storm.

‘But, first, a hush of peace—a soundless calm  
descends;

The struggle of distress, and fierce impatience ends;  
Mute music soothes my breast—unuttered har-  
mony,

That I could never dream, till Earth was lost to me.

‘Then dawns the Invisible; the Unseen its truth  
reveals;

My outward sense is gone, my inward essence feels:  
Its wings are almost free—its home, its harbour  
found,

Measuring the gulf, it stoops and dares the final  
bound.

‘Oh! dreadful is the check—intense the agony—  
When the ear begins to hear, and the eye begins to  
see;

When the pulse begins to throb, the brain to think  
again;

The soul to feel the flesh, and the flesh to feel the  
chain.

‘Yet I would lose no sting, would wish no torture  
less;

The more that anguish racks, the earlier it will  
bless;

And robed in fires of hell, or bright with heavenly  
shine,  
If it but herald death, the vision is divine!’  
She ceased to speak, and we, unanswering, turned  
to go—  
We had no further power to work the captive woe:  
Her cheek, her gleaming eye, declared that man  
had given  
A sentence, unapproved, and overruled by Heaven.

## ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH

1819–1861

## GREEN FIELDS OF ENGLAND

GREEN fields of England! wheresoe’er  
Across this watery waste we fare,  
Your image at our hearts we bear,  
Green fields of England, everywhere.

Sweet eyes in England, I must flee  
Past where the wave’s last confines be,  
Ere your loved smile I cease to see,  
Sweet eyes in England, dear to me.

Dear home in England, safe and fast  
If but in thee my lot lie cast,  
The past shall seem a nothing past  
To thee, dear home, if won at last;  
Dear home in England, won at last.

## THE MEETING

SOME future day when what is now is not,  
When all old faults and follies are forgot,  
And thoughts of difference passed like dreams away,  
We’ll meet again, upon some future day.



When all that hindered, all that vexed our love  
As tall rank weeds will climb the blade above,  
When all but it has yielded to decay,  
We'll meet again upon some future day.

When we have proved, each on his course alone,  
The wider world, and learnt what's now unknown,  
Have made life clear and worked out each a way,  
We'll meet again—we shall have much to say.

With happier mood, and feelings born anew,  
Our boyhood's bygone fancies we'll review,  
Talk o'er old talks, play as we used to play,  
And meet again, on many a future day.

Some day, which oft our hearts shall yearn to see,  
In some far year, though distant yet to be,  
Shall we indeed,—ye winds and waters say!—  
Meet yet again, upon some future day?

#### SAY NOT, THE STRUGGLE NAUGHT AVAILETH

SAY not, the struggle naught availeth,  
The labour and the wounds are vain,  
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,  
And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;  
It may be, in yon smoke concealed,  
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,  
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,  
Seem here no painful inch to gain,  
Far back, through creeks, and inlets making,  
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,  
When daylight comes, comes in the light,  
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,  
But westward, look, the land is bright.

## QUA CURSUM VENTUS

As ships, becalmed at eve, that lay  
With canvas drooping, side by side,  
Two towers of sail at dawn of day  
Are scarce long leagues apart descried ;

When fell the night, upsprung the breeze,  
And all the darkling hours they plied,  
Nor dreamt but each the self-same seas  
By each was cleaving, side by side :

E'en so—but why the tale reveal  
Of those, whom year by year unchanged,  
Brief absence joined anew to feel,  
Astounded, soul from soul estranged ?

At dead of night their sails were filled,  
And onward each rejoicing steered—  
Ah, neither blame, for neither willed,  
Or wist, what first with dawn appeared !

To veer, how vain ! On, onward strain,  
Brave barks ! In light, in darkness too,  
Through winds and tides one compass guides—  
To that, and your own selves, be true.

But O blithe breeze ! and O great seas,  
Though ne'er that earliest parting past,  
On your wide plain they join again,  
Together lead them home at last.

One port, methought, alike they sought,  
One purpose hold where'er they fare,—  
O bounding breeze, O rushing seas!  
At last, at last, unite them there!

## WHERE LIES THE LAND

WHERE lies the land to which the ship would go?  
Far, far ahead, is all her seamen know.  
And where the land she travels from? Away,  
Far, far behind, is all that they can say.

On sunny noons upon the deck's smooth face,  
Linked arm in arm, how pleasant here to pace;  
Or, o'er the stern reclining, watch below  
The foaming wake far widening as we go.

On stormy nights when wild north-westerns rave,  
How proud a thing to fight with wind and wave!  
The dripping sailor on the reeling mast  
Exults to bear, and scorns to wish it past.

Where lies the land to which the ship would go?  
Far, far ahead, is all her seamen know.  
And where the land she travels from? Away,  
Far, far behind, is all that they can say.

HOME, ROSE, AND HOME, PROVENCE AND  
LA PALIE

ITE DOMUM SATURAE, VENIT HESPERUS

THE skies have sunk, and hid the upper snow,  
(Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie)  
The rainy clouds are filing fast below,  
And wet will be the path, and wet shall we.  
Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie.

Ah dear, and where is he, a year ago,  
Who stepped beside and cheered us on and on ?  
My sweetheart wanders far away from me,  
In foreign land or on a foreign sea.  
Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie.

The lightning zigzags shoot across the sky,  
(Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie,)  
And through the vale the rains go sweeping by ;  
Ah me, and when in shelter shall we be ?  
Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie.

Cold, dreary cold, the stormy winds feel they  
O'er foreign lands and foreign seas that stray.  
(Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie.)  
And doth he e'er, I wonder, bring to mind  
The pleasant huts and herds he left behind ?  
And doth he sometimes in his slumbering see  
The feeding kine, and doth he think of me,  
My sweetheart wandering wheresoe'er it be ?  
Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie.

The thunder bellows far from snow to snow,  
(Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie,)  
And loud and louder roars the flood below.  
Heigh-ho ! but soon in shelter shall we be :  
Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie.

Or shall he find before his term be sped,  
Some comelier maid that he shall wish to wed ?  
(Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie.)  
For weary is work, and weary day by day  
To have your comfort miles on miles away.  
Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie.

Or may it be that I shall find my mate,  
And he returning see himself too late ?

For work we must, and what we see, we see,  
And God he knows, and what must be, must be,  
When sweethearts wander far away from me.  
Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie.

The sky behind is brightening up anew  
(Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie).  
The rain is ending, and our journey too:  
Heigh-ho! aha! for here at home are we:—  
In, Rose, and in, Provence and La Palie.

FROM 'THE BOTHIE OF TOBER-NA-VUOLICH'  
THERE is a stream, I name not its name, lest inquisi-  
tive tourist  
Hunt it, and make it a lion, and get it at last into  
guide-books,  
Springing far off from a loch unexplored in the folds  
of great mountains,  
Falling two miles through rowan and stunted alder,  
enveloped  
Then for four more in a forest of pine, where broad  
and ample  
Spreads, to convey it, the glen with heathery slopes  
on both sides:  
Broad and fair the stream, with occasional falls and  
narrows;  
But, where the glen of its course approaches the vale  
of the river,  
Met and blocked by a huge interposing mass of  
granite,  
Scarce by a channel deep-cut, raging up, and  
raging onward,  
Forces its flood through a passage so narrow a lady  
would step it.

There, across the great rocky wharves, a wooden  
bridge goes,  
Carrying a path to the forest; below, three hundred  
yards, say,  
Lower in level some twenty-five feet, through flats  
of shingle,  
Stepping-stones and a cart-track cross in the open  
valley.

But in the interval here the boiling pent-up water  
Frees itself by a final descent, attaining a basin,  
Ten feet wide and eighteen long, with whiteness and  
fury

Occupied partly, but mostly pellucid, pure, a mirror;  
Beautiful there for the colour derived from green  
rocks under;

Beautiful, most of all, where beads of foam uprising  
Mingle their clouds of white with the delicate hue  
of the stillness.

Cliff over cliff for its sides, with rowan and pendent  
birch boughs,

Here it lies, unthought of above at the bridge and  
pathway,

Still more enclosed from below by wood and rocky  
projection.

You are shut in, left alone with yourself and perfec-  
tion of water,

Hid on all sides, left alone with yourself and the  
goddess of bathing.

Here, the pride of the plunger, you stride the fall  
and clear it;

Here, the delight of the bather, you roll in beaded  
sparklings,

Here into pure green depth drop down from lofty  
ledges.

## CHARLES KINGSLEY

1819-1875

## ODE TO THE NORTH-EAST WIND

WELCOME, wild North-easter!  
Shame it is to see  
Odes to every zephyr;  
Ne'er a verse to thee.  
Welcome, black North-easter!  
O'er the German foam;  
O'er the Danish moorlands,  
From thy frozen home.  
Tired we are of summer,  
Tired of gaudy glare,  
Showers soft and steaming,  
Hot and breathless air.  
Tired of listless dreaming,  
Through the lazy day:  
Jovial wind of winter,  
Turn us out to play!  
Sweep the golden reed-beds;  
Crisp the lazy dyke;  
Hunger into madness  
Every plunging pike.  
Fill the lake with wild-fowl;  
Fill the marsh with snipe;  
While on dreary moorlands  
Lonely curlew pipe.  
Through the black fir-forest  
Thunder harsh and dry,  
Shattering down the snow-flakes  
Off the curdled sky.  
Hark! The brave North-easter!  
Breast-high lies the scent,

On by holt and headland,  
Over heath and bent.  
Chime, ye dappled darlings,  
Through the sleet and snow.  
Who can over-ride you?  
Let the horses go!  
Chime, ye dappled darlings,  
Down the roaring blast;  
You shall see a fox die  
Ere an hour be past.  
Go! and rest to-morrow,  
Hunting in your dreams,  
While our skates are ringing  
O'er the frozen streams.  
Let the luscious South-wind  
Breathe in lovers' sighs  
While the lazy gallants  
Bask in ladies' eyes.  
What does he but soften  
Heart alike and pen?  
'Tis the hard grey weather  
Breeds hard English men.  
What 's the soft South-wester?  
'Tis the ladies' breeze,  
Bringing home their trueloves  
Out of all the seas:  
But the black North-easter,  
Through the snow-storm hurled,  
Drives our English hearts of oak  
Seaward round the world.  
Come, as came our fathers,  
Heralded by thee,

holt] wood.

bent] heath.



Conquering from the eastward,  
Lords by land and sea.  
Come ; and strong within us  
Stir the Vikings' blood ;  
Bracing brain and sinew ;  
Blow, thou wind of God !

## THE SOUTH WIND

Oh blessed drums of Aldershot !  
Oh blessed south-west train !  
Oh blessed, blessed Speaker's clock,  
All prophesying rain !

Oh blessed yaffil, laughing loud !  
Oh blessed falling glass !  
Oh blessed fan of cold gray cloud !  
Oh blessed smelling grass !

Oh bless'd South wind that toots his horn  
Through every hole and crack !  
I'm off at eight to-morrow morn,  
To bring *such* fishes back !

## THE BALLAD OF EARL HALDAN'S DAUGHTER

It was Earl Haldan's daughter,  
She looked across the sea ;  
She looked across the water ;  
And long and loud laughed she :  
'The locks of six princesses  
Must be my marriage fee,  
So hey bonny boat, and ho bonny boat !  
Who comes a-wooing me ?'

It was Earl Haldan's daughter,  
She walked along the sand;  
When she was aware of a knight so fair,  
Came sailing to the land.  
His sails were all of velvet,  
His mast of beaten gold,  
And 'Hey bonny boat, and ho bonny boat!  
Who saileth here so bold?'

'The locks of five princesses  
I won beyond the sea;  
I clipt their golden tresses,  
To fringe a cloak for thee.  
One handful yet is wanting,  
But one of all the tale;  
So hey bonny boat, and ho bonny boat!  
Furl up thy velvet sail!'

He leapt into the water,  
That rover young and bold,  
He gript Earl Haldan's daughter,  
He clipt her locks of gold:  
'Go weep, go weep, proud maiden,  
The tale is full to-day.  
Now hey bonny boat, and ho bonny boat!  
Sail Westward ho! away!'

#### THE SANDS OF DEE

'O MARY, go and call the cattle home,  
And call the cattle home,  
And call the cattle home,  
Across the sands of Dee';  
The western wind was wild and dank with foam,  
And all alone went she.

The western tide crept up along the sand,  
And o'er and o'er the sand,  
And round and round the sand,  
As far as eye could see.  
The rolling mist came down and hid the land:  
And never home came she.

'O is it weed, or fish, or floating hair—  
A tress of golden hair,  
A drownèd maiden's hair,  
Above the nets at sea?'  
Was never salmon yet that shone so fair  
Among the stakes of Dee.

They rowed her in across the rolling foam,  
The cruel crawling foam,  
The cruel hungry foam,  
To her grave beside the sea:  
But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home  
Across the sands of Dee.

#### THE SWAN-NECK

EVIL sped the battle-play  
On the Pope Calixtus' day;  
Mighty war-smiths, thanes and lords,  
In Senlac slept the sleep of swords.  
Harold Earl, shot over shield,  
Lay along the autumn weald;  
Slaughter such was never none  
Since the Ethelings England won.

Thither Lady Githa came,  
Weeping sore for grief and shame,  
How may she her first-born tell?  
Frenchmen stript him where he fell,

Gashed and marred his comely face;  
Who can know him in his place?

Up and spake two brethren wise,  
'Youngest hearts have keenest eyes;  
Bird which leaves its mother's nest,  
Moults its pinions, moults its crest.  
Let us call the Swan-neck here,  
She that was his leman dear,  
She shall know him in this stound;  
Foot of wolf, and scent of hound,  
Eye of hawk, and wing of dove  
Carry woman to her love.

Up and spake the Swan-neck high,  
'Go! to all your thanes let cry  
How I loved him best of all,  
I whom men his leman call;  
Better knew his body fair  
Than the mother which him bare.  
When ye lived in wealth and glee  
Then ye scorned to look on me;  
God hath brought the proud ones low  
After me afoot to go!'

Rousing erne and sallow glede,  
Rousing grey wolf off his feed,  
Over franklin, earl, and thane,  
Heaps of mother-naked slain,  
Round the red field tracing slow,  
Stooped that Swan-neck white as snow;  
Never blushed nor turned away,  
Till she found him where he lay;  
Clipt him in her armés fair,  
Wrapt him in her yellow hair,  
Bore him from the battle-stead,  
Saw him laid in pall of lead,

Took her to a minster high,  
For Earl Harold's soul to cry.  
Thus fell Harold, bracelet-giver;  
Jesu rest his soul for ever;  
Angles all from pain deliver;  
Miserere Domine.

## THE PLEASANT ISLE OF AVÈS

O ENGLAND is a pleasant place for them that's rich  
and high,  
But England is a cruel place for such poor folks as I;  
And such a port for mariners I ne'er shall see again  
As the pleasant Isle of Avès, beside the Spanish Main.  
There were forty craft in Avès that were both  
swift and stout,  
All furnished well with small arms and cannons  
round about;  
And a thousand men in Avès made laws so fair and  
free  
To choose their valiant captains and obey them  
loyally.  
Thence we sailed against the Spaniard with his  
hoards of plate and gold,  
Which he wrung with cruel tortures from Indian  
folk of old;  
Likewise the merchant captains, with hearts as  
hard as stone,  
Who flog men and keel-haul them, and starve them  
to the bone.  
O the palms grew high in Avès, and fruits that  
shone like gold,  
And the colibris and parrots they were gorgeous to  
behold;

And the negro maids to Avès from bondage fast  
did flee,

To welcome gallant sailors, a-sweeping in from sea.

O sweet it was in Avès to hear the landward breeze,  
A-swing with good tobacco in a net between the  
trees,

With a negro lass to fan you, while you listened to  
the roar

Of the breakers on the reef outside, that never  
touched the shore.

But Scripture saith, an ending to all fine things  
must be;

So the king's ships sailed on Avès, and quite put  
down were we.

All day we fought like bull-dogs, but they burst  
the booms at night;

And I fled in a piragua, sore wounded, from the  
fight.

Nine days I floated starving, and a negro lass  
beside,

Till, for all I tried to cheer her, the poor young thing  
she died;

But as I lay a gasping, a Bristol sail came by,  
And brought me home to England here, to beg  
until I die.

And now I'm old and going—I'm sure I can't tell  
where;

One comfort is, this world's so hard, I can't be  
worse off there:

If I might but be a sea-dove, I'd fly across the main,  
To the pleasant Isle of Avès, to look at it once  
again.

## AIRLY BEACON

AIRLY Beacon, Airly Beacon ;  
Oh the pleasant sight to see  
Shires and towns from Airly Beacon,  
While my love climbed up to me!

Airly Beacon, Airly Beacon ;  
Oh the happy hours we lay  
Deep in fern on Airly Beacon,  
Courting through the summer's day!

Airly Beacon, Airly Beacon ;  
Oh the weary haunt for me,  
All alone on Airly Beacon,  
With his baby on my knee!

## THE BAD SQUIRE

THE merry brown hares came leaping  
Over the crest of the hill,  
Where the clover and corn lay sleeping  
Under the moonlight still.

Leaping late and early,  
Till under their bite and their tread  
The swedes and the wheat and the barley  
Lay cankered and trampled and dead.

A poacher's widow sat sighing  
On the side of the white chalk bank,  
Where under the gloomy fir-woods  
One spot in the ley throve rank.

She watched a long tuft of clover,  
Where rabbit or hare never ran ;  
For its black sour haulm covered over  
The blood of a murdered man.

She thought of the dark plantation,  
And the hares, and her husband's blood,  
And the voice of her indignation  
Rose up to the throne of God.

'I am long past wailing and whining—  
I have wept too much in my life:  
I've had twenty years of pining  
As an English labourer's wife.

'A labourer in Christian England,  
Where they cant of a Saviour's name,  
And yet waste men's lives like the vermin's  
For a few more brace of game.

'There 's blood on your new foreign shrubs, squire,  
There 's blood on your pointer's feet;  
There 's blood on the game you sell, squire,  
And there 's blood on the game you eat.

'You have sold the labouring-man, squire,  
Body and soul to shame,  
To pay for your seat in the House, squire,  
And to pay for the feed of your game.

'You made him a poacher yourself, squire,  
When you'd give neither work nor meat,  
And your barley-fed hares robbed the garden  
At our starving children's feet;

'When, packed in one reeking chamber,  
Man, maid, mother, and little ones lay;  
While the rain pattered in on the rotting bride-bed,  
And the walls let in the day.

'When we lay in the burning fever  
On the mud of the cold clay floor,  
Till you parted us all for three months, squire,  
At the dreary workhouse-door.



‘We quarrelled like brutes, and who wonders ?

What self-respect could we keep,  
Worse housed than your hacks and your pointers,  
Worse fed than your hogs and your sheep ?

‘Our daughters with base-born babies  
Have wandered away in their shame ;  
If your misses had slept, squire, where they did,  
Your misses might do the same.

‘Can your lady patch hearts that are breaking  
With handfuls of coals and rice,  
Or by dealing out flannel and sheeting  
A little below cost price ?

‘You may tire of the jail and the workhouse,  
And take to allotments and schools,  
But you’ve run up a debt that will never  
Be paid us by penny-club rules.

‘In the season of shame and sadness,  
In the dark and dreary day,  
When scrofula, gout, and madness  
Are eating your race away ;

‘When to kennels and liveried varlets  
You have cast your daughter’s bread,  
And, worn out with liquor and harlots,  
Your heir at your feet lies dead ;

‘When your youngest, the mealy-mouthed rector,  
Lets your soul rot asleep to the grave,  
You will find in your God the protector  
Of the freeman you fancied your slave.’

She looked at the tuft of clover,  
And wept till her heart grew light ;  
And at last, when her passion was over,  
Went wandering into the night.

But the merry brown hares came leaping  
Over the uplands still,  
Where the clover and corn lay sleeping  
On the side of the white chalk hill.

### THE THREE FISHERS

THREE fishers went sailing away to the West.  
Away to the West as the sun went down;  
Each thought on the woman who loved him the best,  
And the children stood watching them out of the town;

For men must work, and women must weep,  
And there's little to earn, and many to keep,  
Though the harbour-bar be moaning.

Three wives sat up in the lighthouse tower,  
And they trimmed the lamps as the sun went down;

They looked at the squall, and they looked at the shower,  
And the night-rack came rolling up ragged and brown.

But men must work, and women must weep,  
Though storms be sudden, and waters deep,  
And the harbour-bar be moaning.

Three corpses lay out on the shining sands,  
In the morning gleam as the tide went down,  
And the women are weeping and wringing their hands

For those who will never come home to the town;  
For men must work, and women must weep,  
And the sooner it's over, the sooner to sleep;  
And good-bye to the bar and its moaning.

## YOUNG AND OLD

WHEN all the world is young, lad,  
And all the trees are green ;  
And every goose a swan, lad,  
And every lass a queen ;  
Then hey for boot and horse, lad,  
And round the world away ;  
Young blood must have its course, lad,  
And every dog his day.

When all the world is old, lad,  
And all the trees are brown ;  
And all the sport is stale, lad,  
And all the wheels run down ;  
Creep home, and take your place there,  
The spent and maimed among :  
God grant you find one face there,  
You loved when all was young.

## JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

1819-1891

## JUNE

FROM 'THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL'

FOR a cap and bells our lives we pay,  
Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking :  
'Tis heaven alone that is given away,  
'Tis only God may be had for the asking ;  
No price is set on the lavish summer ;  
June may be had by the poorest comer.  
And what is so rare as a day in June ?  
Then, if ever, come perfect days ;  
Then Heaven tries earth if it be in tune,  
And over it softly her warm ear lays :

Whether we look, or whether we listen,  
We hear life murmur, or see it glisten;  
Every clod feels a stir of might,

An instinct within it that reaches and towers,  
And, groping blindly above it for light, .  
Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers;  
The flush of life may well be seen

Thrilling back over hills and valleys;  
The cowslip startles in meadows green,  
The buttercup catches the sun in its chalice,  
And there 's never a leaf nor a blade too mean

To be some happy creature's palace;  
The little bird sits at his door in the sun,  
Atilt like a blossom among the leaves,  
And lets his illumined being o'errun

With the deluge of summer it receives;  
His mate feels the eggs beneath her wings,  
And the heart in her dumb breast flutters and sings;  
He sings to the wide world, and she to her nest,—  
In the nice ear of Nature which song is the best?

Now is the high-tide of the year,

And whatever of life hath ebbed away  
Comes flooding back with a ripply cheer,

Into every bare inlet and creek and bay;  
Now the heart is so full that a drop overfills it,  
We are happy now because God wills it;  
No matter how barren the past may have been,  
'Tis enough for us now that the leaves are green;  
We sit in the warm shade and feel right well  
How the sap creeps up and the blossoms swell;  
We may shut our eyes, but we cannot help know-  
ing

That skies are clear and grass is growing;

The breeze comes whispering in our ear,  
That dandelions are blossoming near,  
That maize has sprouted, that streams are flow-  
ing,  
That the river is bluer than the sky,  
That the robin is plastering his house hard by;  
And if the breeze kept the good news back,  
For other couriers we should not lack;  
We could guess it all by yon heifer's lowing,—  
And hark! how clear bold chanticleer,  
Warmed with the new wine of the year,  
Tells all in his lusty crowing!

## THE COURTIN'

God makes sech nights, all white an' still  
Fur 'z you can look or listen,  
Moonshine an' snow on field an' hill,  
All silence an' all glisten.

Zekle crep' up quite unbeknown  
An' peeked in thru' the winder,  
An' there sot Hudly all alone,  
'ith no one nigh to hender.

A fireplace filled the room's one side  
With half a cord o' wood in—  
There warn't no stoves (tell comfort died)  
To bake ye to a puddin'.

The wa'nut logs shot sparkles out  
Towards the pootiest, bless her,  
An' leetle flames danced all about  
The chiny on the dresser.

Agin the chimbley crook-necks hung,  
An' in amongst 'em rusted  
The ole queen's-arm that gran'ther Young  
Fetched back from Concord busted.

The very room, coz she was in,  
Seemed warm from floor to ceilin',  
An' she looked full ez rosy agin  
Ez the apples she was peelin'.

'Twas kin' o' kingdom-come to look  
On such a blessed cretur,  
A dogrose blushin' to a brook  
Ain't modester nor sweeter.

He was six foot o' man, A 1,  
Clear grit an' human natur',  
None couldn 't quicker pitch a ton  
Nor dror a furrer straighter.

He'd sparked it with full twenty gals,  
Hed squired 'em, danced 'em, druv 'em,  
Fust this one, an' then thet, by spells—  
All is, he could n't love 'em.

But long o' her his veins 'ould run  
All crinkly like curled maple,  
The side she breshed felt full o' sun  
Ez a south slope in Ap'il.

She thought no v'ice hed sech a swing  
Ez hisn in the choir;  
My! when he made Ole Hunderd ring,  
She *knowed* the Lord was nigher.

An' she'd blush scarlit, right in prayer,  
When her new meetin'-bunnet  
Felt somehow thru' its crown a pair  
O' blue eyes sot upon it.

Thet night, I tell ye, she looked *some!*

She seemed to 've gut a new soul,  
For she felt sartin-sure he'd come,  
Down to her very shoe-sole.

She heered a foot, an' knowed it tu,  
A-raspin on the scraper,—  
All ways to once her feelins flew  
Like sparks in burnt-up paper.

He kin' o' l'itered on the mat,  
Some doubtfle o' the sekle,  
His heart kep' goin' pity-pat,  
But hern went pity Zekle.

An' yit she gin her cheer a jerk  
Ez though she wished him funder,  
An' on her apples kep' to work,  
Parin' away like murder.

'You want to see my Pa, I s'pose?'  
'Wal—no—I come dasignin'—'  
'To see my Ma? She's sprinklin' clo'es  
Agin to-morrer's i'nin'.'

To say why gals acts so or so,  
Or don't, 'ould be presumin';  
Mebbe to mean *yes* an' say *no*  
Comes nateral to women.

He stood a spell on one foot fust,  
Then stood a spell on t'other,  
An' on which one he felt the wust  
He could n't ha' told ye nuther.

Says he, 'I'd better call agin';  
Says she, 'Think likely, Mister':  
Thet last word pricked him like a pin,  
An'—Wal, he up an' kist her.

When Ma bimeby upon 'em slips,  
Huldy sot pale ez ashes,  
All kin' o' smily roun' the lips  
An' teary roun' the lashes.

For she was jes' the quiet kind  
Whose naturs never vary,  
Like streams that keep a summer mind  
Snow-hid in Jenooary.

The blood clost roun' her heart felt glued  
Too tight for all expressin',  
Tell mother see how metters stood,  
An' gin 'em both her blessin'.

Then her red come back like the tide  
Down to the Bay o' Fundy,  
An' all I know is they was cried  
In meetin' come nex' Sunday.

## WALT WHITMAN

1819-1892

### O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,  
The ship has weathered every rack, the prize we  
sought is won,  
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all  
exulting,  
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim  
and daring;  
But O heart! heart! heart!  
O the bleeding drops of red!  
Where on the deck my Captain lies,  
Fallen cold and dead.



O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;  
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the  
bugle trills,

For you bouquets and ribboned wreaths—for you  
the shores a-crowding,

For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager  
faces turning;

Here Captain! dear father!

This arm beneath your head!

It is some dream that on the deck,

You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and  
still,

My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor  
will,

The ship is anchored safe and sound, its voyage  
closed and done,

From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with  
object won;

Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells!

But I, with mournful tread,

Walk the deck my Captain lies,

Fallen cold and dead.

#### FROM 'THE SONG OF MYSELF'

##### THE DYING FIREMAN

I AM the mashed fireman with breast-bone broken,  
Tumbling walls buried me in their débris,

Heat and smoke I inspired, I heard the yelling  
shouts of my comrades,

I heard the distant click of their picks and shovels,  
They have cleared the beams away, they tenderly  
lift me forth.

I lie in the night air in my red shirt, the pervading  
hush is for my sake,  
Painless after all I lie exhausted but not so unhappy,  
White and beautiful are the faces around me, the  
heads are bared of their fire-caps,  
The kneeling crowd fades with the light of the  
torches.

### ANIMALS

I THINK I could turn and live with animals, they  
are so placid and self-contained,  
I stand and look at them long and long.

They do not sweat and whine about their condition,  
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for  
their sins,  
They do not make me sick discussing their duty to  
God,  
Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented with  
the mania of owning things,  
Not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that  
lived thousands of years ago,  
Not one is respectable or unhappy over the whole  
earth.

So they show their relations to me and I accept  
them,  
They bring me tokens of myself, they evince them  
plainly in their possession.

I wonder where they get those tokens,  
Did I pass that way huge times ago and negligently  
drop them?

Myself moving forward then and now and forever,  
Gathering and showing more always and with  
velocity,  
Infinite and omnigenous, and the like of these  
among them,  
Not too exclusive toward the reachers of my remem-  
brancers,  
Picking out here one that I love, and now go with  
him on brotherly terms.

A gigantic beauty of a stallion, fresh and responsive  
to my caresses,  
Head high in the forehead, wide between the ears,  
Limbs glossy and supple, tail dusting the ground,  
Eyes full of sparkling wickedness, ears finely cut,  
flexibly moving.

His nostrils dilate as my heels embrace him,  
His well-built limbs tremble with pleasure as we  
race around and return.

I but use you a minute, then I resign you, stallion,  
Why do I need your paces when I myself out-gallop  
them?  
Even as I stand or sit passing faster than you.

#### OF THE TERRIBLE DOUBT OF APPEARANCES

OF the terrible doubt of appearances,  
Of the uncertainty after all, that we may be deluded,  
That maybe reliance and hope are but speculations  
after all,  
That maybe identity beyond the grave is a beauti-  
ful fable only,  
Maybe the things I perceive, the animals, plants,  
men, hills, shining and flowing waters,

The skies of day and night, colours, densities, forms,  
maybe these are (as doubtless they are) only  
apparitions, and the real something has yet to  
be known,

(How often they dart out of themselves as if to con-  
found me and mock me!

How often I think neither I know, nor any man  
knows, aught of them,)

Maybe seeming to me what they are (as doubtless  
they indeed but seem) as from my present point  
of view, and might prove (as of course they  
would) nought of what they appear, or nought  
anyhow, from entirely changed points of  
view;

To me these and the like of these are curiously  
answered by my lovers, my dear friends,

When he whom I love travels with me or sits a long  
while holding me by the hand,

When the subtle air, the impalpable, the sense that  
words and reason hold not, surround us and  
pervade us,

Then I am charged with untold and untellable  
wisdom, I am silent, I require nothing further,  
I cannot answer the question of appearances or that  
of identity beyond the grave,

But I walk or sit indifferent, I am satisfied,  
He ahold of my hand has completely satisfied me.

PIONEERS! O PIONEERS!

COME my tan-faced children,  
Follow well in order, get your weapons ready,  
Have you your pistols? have you your sharp-edged  
axes?

Pioneers! O pioneers!

For we cannot tarry here,  
We must march my darlings, we must bear the  
    brunt of danger,  
We the youthful sinewy races, all the rest on us  
    depend,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!  
    O you youths, Western youths,  
So impatient, full of action, full of manly pride and  
    friendship,  
Plain I see you Western youths, see you tramping  
    with the foremost,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!  
    Have the elder races halted?  
Do they droop and end their lesson, wearied over  
    there beyond the seas?  
We take up the task eternal, and the burden and  
    the lesson,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!  
    All the past we leave behind,  
We debouch upon a newer mightier world, varied  
    world,  
Fresh and strong the world we seize, world of labour  
    and the march,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!  
    We detachments steady throwing,  
Down the edges, through the passes, up the moun-  
    tains steep,  
Conquering, holding, daring, venturing as we go the  
    unknown ways,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!  
    We primaeval forests felling,  
We the rivers stemming, vexing we and piercing  
    deep the mines within,

We the surface broad surveying, we the virgin soil  
upheaving,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Colorado men are we,  
From the peaks gigantic, from the great sierras and  
the high plateaus,  
From the mine and from the gully, from the hunting  
trail we come,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

From Nebraska, from Arkansas,  
Central inland race are we, from Missouri with the  
continental blood interveined,  
All the hands of comrades clasping, all the Southern,  
all the Northern,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O resistless restless race!  
O beloved race in all! O my breast aches with tender  
love for all!  
O I mourn and yet exult, I am rapt with love for all,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Raise the mighty mother mistress,  
Waving high the delicate mistress, over all the  
starry mistress, (bend your heads all,)  
Raise the fanged and warlike mistress, stern, im-  
passive, weaponed mistress,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

See my children, resolute children,  
By those swarms upon our rear we must never  
yield or falter,  
Ages back in ghostly millions frowning there behind  
us urging,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

On and on the compact ranks,  
With accessions ever waiting, with the places of the  
dead quickly filled,  
Through the battle, through defeat, moving yet and  
never stopping,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O to die advancing on!

Are there some of us to droop and die? has the hour  
come?

Then upon the march we fittest die, soon and sure  
the gap is filled,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the pulses of the world,  
Falling in they beat for us, with the Western move-  
ment beat,

Holding single or together, steady moving to the  
front, all for us,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Life's involved and varied pageants,  
All the forms and shows, all the workmen at their  
work,

All the seamen and the landsmen, all the masters  
with their slaves,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the hapless silent lovers,  
All the prisoners in the prisons, all the righteous and  
the wicked,

All the joyous, all the sorrowing, all the living, all  
the dying,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

I too with my soul and body,  
We, a curious trio, picking, wandering on our  
way,

Through these shores amid the shadows, with the  
apparitions pressing,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Lo the darting bowling orb!  
Lo, the brother orbs around, all the clustering suns  
and planets,  
All the dazzling days, all the mystic nights with  
dreams,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

These are of us, they are with us,  
All for primal needed work, while the followers there  
in embryo wait behind,

We to-day's procession heading, we the route for  
travel clearing,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

O you daughters of the West!  
O you young and elder daughters! O you mothers  
and you wives!

Never must you be divided, in our ranks you move  
united,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

Minstrels latent on the prairies!  
(Shrouded bards of other lands, you may rest, you  
have done your work,)

Soon I hear you coming warbling, soon you rise and  
tramp amid us,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

Not for delectations sweet,  
Not the cushion and the slipper, not the peaceful and  
the studious,

Not the riches safe and palling, not for us the tame  
enjoyment,

Pioneers! O pioneers!



Do the feasters gluttonous feast?  
Do the corpulent sleepers sleep? have they locked  
and bolted doors?  
Still be ours the diet hard, and the blanket on the  
ground,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Has the night descended?  
Was the road of late so toilsome? did we stop dis-  
couraged nodding on our way?  
Yet a passing hour I yield you in your tracks to  
pause oblivious,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Till with sound of trumpet,  
Far, far off the daybreak call—hark! how loud and  
clear I hear it wind,  
Swift! to the head of the army!—swift! spring to  
your places,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

#### WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOORYARD BLOOMED

##### I

WHEN lilacs last in the dooryard bloomed,  
And the great star early drooped in the western sky  
in the night,  
I mourned, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning  
spring.

Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring,  
Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the  
west,  
And thought of him I love.

## II

O powerful western fallen star!  
O shades of night—O moody, tearful night!  
O great star disappeared—O the black murk that  
    hides the star!  
O cruel hands that hold me powerless—O helpless  
    soul of me!  
O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul.

## III

In the dooryard fronting an old farm-house near the  
    white-washed palings,  
Stands the lilac-bush tall-growing with heart-  
    shaped leaves of rich green,  
With many a pointed blossom rising delicate, with  
    the perfume strong I love,  
With every leaf a miracle—and from this bush in  
    the dooryard,  
With delicate-coloured blossoms and heart-shaped  
    leaves of rich green,  
A sprig with its flower I break.

## IV

In the swamp in secluded recesses,  
A shy and hidden bird is warbling a song.  
Solitary the thrush,  
The hermit withdrawn to himself, avoiding the  
    settlements,  
Sings by himself a song.  
Song of the bleeding throat,  
Death's outlet song of life, (for well dear brother I  
    know,  
If thou wast not granted to sing thou would'st  
    surely die.)

## V

Over the breast of the spring, the land, amid cities,  
Amid lanes and through old woods, where lately the  
    violets peeped from the ground, spotting the  
    grey débris,  
Amid the grass in the fields each side of the lanes,  
    passing the endless grass,  
Passing the yellow-speared wheat, every grain from  
    its shroud in the dark-brown fields uprisen,  
Passing the apple-tree blows of white and pink in  
    the orchards,  
Carrying a corpse to where it shall rest in the grave,  
Night and day journeys a coffin.

## VI

Coffin that passes through lanes and streets,  
Through day and night with the great cloud darken-  
    ing the land,  
With the pomp of the inlooped flags with the cities  
    draped in black,  
With the show of the States themselves as of crape-  
    veiled women standing,  
With processions long and winding and the flam-  
    beaus of the night,  
With the countless torches lit, with the silent sea of  
    faces and the unbared heads,  
With the waiting dépôt, the arriving coffin, and the  
    sombre faces,  
With dirges through the night, with the thousand  
    voices rising strong and solemn,  
With all the mournful voices of the dirges poured  
    around the coffin,  
The dim-lit churches and the shuddering organs—  
    where amid these you journey,

With the tolling tolling bells' perpetual clang,  
Here, coffin that slowly passes,  
I give you my sprig of lilac.

## VII

(Nor for you, for one alone,  
Blossoms and branches green to coffins all I bring,  
For fresh as the morning, thus would I chant a song  
for you O sane and sacred death.

All over bouquets of roses,  
O death, I cover you over with roses and early lilies,  
But mostly and now the lilac that blooms the first,  
Copious I break, I break the sprigs from the bushes,  
With loaded arms I come, pouring for you,  
For you and the coffins all of you O death.)

## VIII

O western orb sailing the heaven,  
Now I know what you must have meant as a month  
since I walked,  
As I walked in silence the transparent shadowy  
night,  
As I saw you had something to tell as you bent to  
me night after night,  
As you drooped from the sky low down as if to my  
side, (while the other stars all looked on,)  
As we wandered together the solemn night, (for  
something I know not what kept me from sleep,)  
As the night advanced, and I saw on the rim of the  
west how full you were of woe,  
As I stood on the rising ground in the breeze in the  
cool transparent night,  
As I watched where you passed and was lost in the  
netherward black of the night,

As my soul in its trouble dissatisfied sank, as where  
you sad orb,  
Concluded, dropt in the night, and was gone.

## IX

Sing on there in the swamp,  
O singer bashful and tender, I hear your notes, I  
hear your call,  
I hear, I come presently, I understand you,  
But a moment I linger, for the lustrous star has  
detained me,  
The star my departing comrade holds and detains  
me.

## X

O how shall I warble myself for the dead one there I  
loved?  
And how shall I deck my song for the large sweet  
soul that has gone?  
And what shall my perfume be for the grave of him  
I love?

Sea-winds blown from east and west,  
Blown from the Eastern sea and blown from the  
Western sea, till there on the prairies meeting,  
These and with these and the breath of my chant,  
I'll perfume the grave of him I love.

## XI

O what shall I hang on the chamber walls?  
And what shall the pictures be that I hang on the  
walls,  
To adorn the burial-house of him I love?  
Pictures of growing spring and farms and homes,  
With the Fourth-month eve at sundown, and the  
grey smoke lucid and bright,

With floods of the yellow gold of the gorgeous, indolent, sinking sun, burning, expanding the air,  
With the fresh sweet herbage under foot, and the pale green leaves of the trees prolific,  
In the distance the flowing glaze, the breast of the river, with a wind-dapple here and there,  
With ranging hills on the banks, with many a line against the sky, and shadows,  
And the city at hand with dwellings so dense, and stacks of chimneys,  
And all the scenes of life and the workshops, and the workmen homeward returning.

## XII

Lo, body and soul—this land,  
My own Manhattan with spires, and the sparkling and hurrying tides, and the ships,  
The varied and ample land, the South and the North in the light, Ohio's shores and flashing Missouri,  
And ever the far-spreading prairies covered with grass and corn.

Lo, the most excellent sun so calm and haughty,  
The violet and purple morn with just-felt breezes,  
The gentle soft-born measureless light,  
The miracle spreading bathing all, the fulfilled noon,  
The coming eve delicious, the welcome night and the stars,  
Over my cities shining all, enveloping man and land.

## XIII

Sing on, sing on you grey-brown bird,  
Sing from the swamps, the recesses, pour your chant from the bushes,  
Limitless out of the dusk, out of the cedars and pines.

Sing on dearest brother, warble your reedy song,  
Loud human song, with voice of uttermost woe.

O liquid and free and tender!  
O wild and loose to my soul—O wondrous singer!  
You only I hear—yet the star holds me, (but will  
soon depart,)  
Yet the lilac with mastering odour holds me.

## XIV

Now while I sat in the day and looked forth,  
In the close of the day with its light and the fields  
of spring, and the farmers preparing their  
crops,  
In the large unconscious scenery of my land with its  
lakes and forests,  
In the heavenly aerial beauty, (after the perturb'd  
winds and the storms,)  
Under the arching heavens of the afternoon swift  
passing, and the voices of children and women,  
The many-moving sea-tides, and I saw the ships  
how they sailed,  
And the summer approaching with richness, and the  
fields all busy with labour,  
And the infinite separate houses, how they all went  
on, each with its meals and minutiae of daily  
usages,  
And the streets how their throbbings throbbed and  
the cities pent—lo, then and there,  
Falling upon them all and among them all, envelop-  
ing me with the rest,  
Appeared the cloud, appeared the long black trail,  
And I knew death, its thought, and the sacred  
knowledge of death.



Then with the knowledge of death as walking one  
side of me,

And the thought of death close-walking the other  
side of me,

And I in the middle as with companions, and as  
holding the hands of companions,

I fled forth to the hiding receiving night that  
talks not,

Down to the shores of the water, the path by the  
swamp in the dimness,

To the solemn shadowy cedars and ghostly pines so  
still.

And the singer so shy to the rest received me,

The grey-brown bird I know received us comrades  
three,

And he sang the carol of death, and a verse for him  
I love.

From deep secluded recesses,

From the fragrant cedars and the ghostly pines so  
still,

Came the carol of the bird.

And the charm of the carol rapt me,

As I held as if by their hands my comrades in the  
night,

And the voice of my spirit tallied the song of the bird.

*Come lovely and soothing death,*

*Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,*

*In the day, in the night, to all, to each,*

*Sooner or later delicate death.*

*Praised be the fathomless universe,*

*For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious,*

*And for love, sweet love—but praise! praise! praise!*

*For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death.*



*Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet,  
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?  
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all,  
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come,  
come unfalteringly.*

*Approach strong deliveress,  
When it is so, when thou hast taken them I joyously  
sing the dead,  
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,  
Laved in the flood of thy bliss O death.*

*From me to thee glad serenades,  
Dances for thee I propose saluting thee, adornments  
and feastings for thee,  
And the sights of the open landscape and the high-  
spread sky are fitting,  
And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful  
night.*

*The night in silence under many a star,  
The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose  
voice I know,  
And the soul turning to thee O vast and well-veiled death,  
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.*

*Over the tree-tops I float thee a song,  
Over the rising and sinking waves, over the myriad  
fields and the prairies wide,  
Over the dense-packed cities all and the teeming  
wharves and ways,  
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee O death.*

## XV

*To the tally of my soul,  
Loud and strong kept up the grey-brown bird,  
With pure deliberate notes spreading filling the night.*

Loud in the pines and cedars dim,  
Clear in the freshness moist and the swamp-perfume,  
And I with my companions there in the night.

While my sight that was bound in my eyes unclosed,  
As to long panoramas of visions.

And I saw askant the armies,  
I saw as in noiseless dreams hundreds of battle-flags,  
Borne through the smoke of the battles and pierced  
with missiles I saw them,  
And carried hither and yon through the smoke, and  
torn and bloody,  
And at last but a few shreds left on the staffs, (and  
all in silence,)  
And all the staffs all splintered and broken.

I saw battle-corpses, myriads of them,  
And the white skeletons of young men, I saw them,  
I saw the débris and débris of all the slain soldiers of  
the war,  
But I saw they were not as was thought,  
They themselves were fully at rest, they suffered  
not,  
The living remained and suffered, the mother  
suffered,  
And the wife and the child and the musing comrade  
suffered,  
And the armies that remained suffered.

## XVI

Passing the visions, passing the night,  
Passing, unloosing the hold of my comrades' hands,  
Passing the song of the hermit bird and the tallying  
song of my soul,

Victorious song, death's outlet song, yet varying  
ever-altering song,  
As low and wailing, yet clear the notes, rising and  
falling, flooding the night,  
Sadly sinking and fainting, as warning and warning,  
and yet again bursting with joy,  
Covering the earth and filling the spread of the  
heaven,  
As that powerful psalm in the night I heard from  
recesses,  
Passing, I leave thee lilac with heart-shaped leaves,  
I leave thee there in the dooryard, blooming,  
returning with spring.

I cease from my song for thee,  
From my gaze on thee in the west, fronting the west,  
communing with thee,  
O comrade lustrous with silver face in the night.  
Yet each to keep and all, retrievments out of the  
night,  
The song, the wondrous chant of the grey-brown bird,  
And the tallying chant, the echo aroused in my soul,  
With the lustrous and drooping star with the  
countenance full of woe,  
With the holders holding my hand nearing the call  
of the bird,  
Comrades mine and I in the midst, and their memory  
ever to keep, for the dead I loved so well,  
For the sweetest, wisest soul of all my days and  
lands—and this for his dear sake,  
Lilac and star and bird twined with the chant of my  
soul,  
There in the fragrant pines and the cedars dusk and  
dim.

## JEAN INGELow

1820-1897

THE HIGH TIDE ON THE COAST OF LINCOLNSHIRE  
(1571)

THE old mayor climbed the belfry tower,  
 The ringers ran by two, by three;  
 'Pull, if ye never pulled before;  
 Good ringers, pull your best,' quoth he.  
 'Play uppe, play uppe, O Boston bells!  
 Ply all your changes, all your swells,  
 Play uppe "The Brides of Enderby".'

Men say it was a stolen tyde—  
 The Lord that sent it, He knows all;  
 But in myne ears doth still abide  
 The message that the bells let fall:  
 And there was naught of strange, beside  
 The flights of mews and peewits pied  
 By millions crouched on the old sea wall.

I sat and spun within the doore,  
 My thread brake off, I raised myne eyes;  
 The level sun, like ruddy ore,  
 Lay sinking in the barren skies;  
 And dark against day's golden death  
 She moved where Lindis wandereth,  
 My sonne's faire wife, Elizabeth.

'Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!' calling,  
 Ere the early dewes were falling,  
 Farre away I heard her song.  
 'Cusha! Cusha!' all along;  
 Where the reedy Lindis floweth,  
 Floweth, floweth,  
 From the meads where melick groweth  
 Faintly came her milking song—

‘Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!’ calling,  
‘For the dewes will soone be falling;  
Leave your meadow grasses mellow,  
Mellow, mellow;  
Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow;  
Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot,  
Quit the stalks of parsley hollow,  
Hollow, hollow;  
Come uppe Jetty, rise and follow,  
From the clovers lift your head;  
Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot,  
Come uppe Jetty, rise and follow,  
Jetty, to the milking shed.’

·If it be long, aye, long ago,  
When I beginne to think howe long,  
Againe I hear the Lindis flow,  
Swift as an arrowe, sharp and strong;  
And all the aire, it seemeth mee,  
Bin full of floating bells (sayth shee),  
That ring the tune of Enderby.

Alle fresh the level pasture lay,  
And not a shadowe mote be seene,  
Save where full fyve good miles away  
The steeple towered from out the greene,  
And lo! the great bell farre and wide  
Was heard in all the country side  
That Saturday at eventide.

The swanherds where their sedges are  
Moved on in sunset’s golden breath,  
The shepherde lads I heard afarre,  
And my sonne’s wife, Elizabeth;

Till floating o'er the grassy sea  
Came downe that kyndly message free,  
The 'Brides of Mavis Enderby'.

Then some looked uppe into the sky,  
And all along where Lindis flows  
To where the goodly vessels lie,  
And where the lordly steeple shows,  
They sayde, 'And why should this thing be?  
What danger lowers by land or sea?  
They ring the tune of Enderby!

'For evil news from Mablethorpe,  
Of pyrate galleys warping down;  
For shippes ashore beyond the scorpe,  
They have not spared to wake the towne:  
But while the west bin red to see,  
And storms be none, and pyrates flee,  
Why ring "The Brides of Enderby"?''

I looked without, and lo! my sonne.  
Came riding downe with might and main:  
He raised a shout as he drew on,  
Till all the welkin rang again,  
'Elizabeth! Elizabeth!'  
(A sweeter woman ne'er drew breath  
Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.)

'The olde sea wall (he cried) is downe,  
The rising tide comes on apace,  
And boats adrift in yonder towne  
Go sailing uppe the market-place.'  
He shook as one that looks on death:  
'God save you, mother!' straight he saith;  
'Where is my wife, Elizabeth?'

'Good sonne, where Lindis winds away,  
With her two bairns I marked her long;  
And ere yon bells beganne to play  
Afar I heard her milking song.'

He looked across the grassy lea,  
To right, to left, 'Ho Enderby!'  
They rang 'The Brides of Enderby'!

With that he cried and beat his breast;  
For, lo! along the river's bed  
A mighty eygre reared his crest,  
And uppe the Lindis raging sped.  
It swept with thunderous noises loud;  
Shaped like a curling snow-white cloud,  
Or like a demon in a shroud.

And rearing Lindis backward pressed  
Shook all her trembling bankes amaine;  
Then madly at the eygre's breast  
Flung uppe her weltering walls again.  
Then bankes came downe with ruin and rout—  
Then beaten foam flew round about—  
Then all the mighty floods were out.

So farre, so fast the eygre drave,  
The heart had hardly time to beat,  
Before a shallow seething wave  
Sobbed in the grasses at oure feet:  
The feet had hardly time to flee  
Before it brake against the knee,  
And all the world was in the sea.

Upon the roofe we sate that night,  
The noise of bells went sweeping by:  
I marked the lofty beacon light  
Stream from the church tower, red and high—



A lurid mark and dread to see;  
And awesome bells they were to mee,  
That in the dark rang 'Enderby'.

They rang the sailor lads to guide  
From roofe to roofe who fearless rowed;  
And I—my sonne was at my side,  
And yet the ruddy beacon glowed:  
And yet he moaned beneath his breath,  
'O come in life, or come in death!  
O lost! my love, Elizabeth.'

And didst thou visit him no more?  
Thou didst, thou didst, my daughter deare;  
The waters laid thee at his doore,  
Ere yet the early dawn was clear.  
Thy pretty bairns in fast embrace,  
The lifted sun shone on thy face,  
Downe drifted to thy dwelling-place.

That flow strewed wrecks about the grass,  
That ebbe swept out the flocks to sea;  
A fatal ebbe and flow, alas!  
To manye more than myne and mee:  
But each will mourn his own (she saith),  
And sweeter woman ne'er drew breath  
Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.

I shall never hear her more  
By the reedy Lindis shore,  
'Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!' calling,  
Ere the early dewes be falling;  
I shall never hear her song,  
'Cusha! Cusha!' all along  
Where the sunny Lindis floweth,  
Goeth, floweth;



From the meads where melick groweth,  
When the water winding down,  
Onward floweth to the town.

I shall never see her more  
Where the reeds and rushes quiver,  
    Shiver, quiver;  
Stand beside the sobbing river,  
Sobbing, throbbing, in its falling  
To the sandy lonesome shore;  
I shall never hear her calling,

‘Leave your meadow grasses mellow,  
    Mellow, mellow;  
Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow;  
Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot;  
Quit your pipes of parsley hollow,  
    Hollow, hollow;  
Come uppe Lightfoot, rise and follow;  
    Lightfoot, Whitefoot,  
From your clovers lift the head;  
Come uppe Jetty, follow, follow,  
    Jetty, to the milking shed.’

#### SEVEN TIMES ONE

There’s no dew left on the daisies and clover,  
    There’s no rain left in heaven:  
I’ve said my ‘seven times’ over and over,  
    Seven times one are seven.

I am old, so old, I can write a letter;  
    My birthday lessons are done;  
The lambs play always, they know no better;  
    They are only one times one.

O moon! in the night I have seen you sailing  
And shining so round and low;  
You were bright! ah bright! but your light is  
failing—  
You are nothing now but a bow.  
You moon, have you done something wrong in  
heaven  
That God has hidden your face?  
I hope if you have you will soon be forgiven,  
And shine again in your place.  
O velvet bee, you're a dusty fellow,  
You've powdered your legs with gold!  
O brave marsh marybuds, rich and yellow,  
Give me your money to hold!  
O columbine, open your folded wrapper,  
Where two twin turtle-doves dwell!  
O cuckoopint, toll me the purple clapper  
That hangs in your clear green bell!  
And show me your nest with the young ones in it;  
I will not steal them away;  
I am old! you may trust me, linnet, linnet—  
I am seven times one to-day.

## FREDERICK LOCKER-LAMPSON

1821-1895

## THE OLD OAK TREE AT HATFIELD BROADOAK

A MIGHTY growth! The county side  
Lamented when the giant died,  
For England loves her trees:  
What misty legends round him cling!  
How lavishly he once would fling  
His acorns to the breeze!

Who struck a thousand roots in fame,  
Who gave the district half its name,  
Will not be soon forgotten:  
Last spring he showed but one green bough,  
The red leaves hang there still, and now  
His very props are rotten !

Elate, the thunderbolt he braved,  
For centuries his branches waved  
A welcome to the blast ;  
From reign to reign he bore a spell—  
No forester had dared to fell  
What time had felled at last.

The monarch wore a leafy crown,  
And wolves, ere wolves were hunted down,  
Sought safety in his gloom ;  
Unnumbered squirrels frolicked free,  
Glad music filled the gallant tree  
From stem to topmost bloom.

'Twere hard to say, 'twere vain to seek  
When first he ventured forth, a meek  
Petitioner for dew ;  
No Saxon spade disturbed his root,  
The rabbit spared the tender shoot,  
And valiantly he grew,

And showed some inches from the ground  
When St. Augustine came and found  
Us very proper Vandals :  
When nymphs had bluer eyes than hose,  
When England measured men by blows,  
And measured time by candles.

The pilgrim blessed his grateful shade  
Ere Richard led the first crusade,  
And maidens led the dance  
Where, boy and man, in summer-time,  
Our Chaucer pondered o'er his rhyme;  
And Robin Hood, perchance,

Stole hither to Maid Marian  
(And if they did not come, one can  
At any rate suppose it);  
They met beneath the misletoe,—  
We've done the same, and ought to know  
The reason why they chose it!

And this was called the *Traitor's Branch*,  
Stern Warwick hung six yeomen stanch  
Along its mighty fork;  
Uncivil wars for them! The fair  
Red rose and white still bloom,—but where  
Are Lancaster and York?

Right mournfully his leaves he shed  
To shroud the graves of England's dead,  
By English falchion slain;  
And cheerfully, for England's sake,  
He sent his kin to sea with Drake,  
When Tudor humbled Spain.

While Blake was fighting with the Dutch  
They gave his poor old arms a crutch;  
And thrice four maids and men ate  
A meal within his rugged bark,  
When Coventry bewitched the Park,  
And Chatham swayed the Senate.

His few remaining boughs were green,  
And dappled sunbeams danced between  
Upon the dappled deer,  
When clad in black, two mourners met  
To read the Waterloo Gazette,—  
They mourned their darling here.

They joined their boy. The tree at last  
Lies prone, discoursing of the past,  
Some fancy-dreams awaking;  
Resigned, though headlong changes come,  
Though nations arm to tuck of drum,  
And dynasties are quaking.

Romantic spot! By honest pride  
Of old tradition sanctified;  
My pensive vigil keeping,  
I feel thy beauty like a spell,  
And thoughts, and tender thoughts, upwell,  
That fill my heart to weeping.

. . . . .

The Squire affirms, with gravest look,  
His oak goes up to Doomsday Book!  
And some say even higher!  
We rode last week to see the ruin,  
We love the fair domain it grew in,  
And well we love the Squire.

A nature loyally controlled,  
And fashioned in the righteous mould  
Of English gentleman;  
Some day my child will read these rhymes,  
She loved her 'godpapa' betimes,—  
The little Christian!

I love the Past, its ripe pleasance,  
 Its lusty thought, and dim romance,  
 And heart-compelling ditties;  
 But more, these ties, in mercy sent,  
 With faith and true affection blent,  
 And, wanting them, I were content  
 To murmur, '*Nunc dimittis.*'

## MATTHEW ARNOLD

1822-1888

## SHAKESPEARE

OTHERS abide our question. Thou art free.  
 We ask and ask: Thou smilest and art still,  
 Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill  
 That to the stars uncrowns his majesty,  
 Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,  
 Making the Heaven of Heavens his dwelling-place,  
 Spares but the cloudy border of his base  
 To the foiled searching of mortality:  
 And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,  
 Self-schooled, self-scanned, self-honoured, self-  
 secure,  
 Didst walk on Earth unguessed at. Better so!  
 All pains the immortal spirit must endure,  
 All weakness that impairs, all griefs that bow,  
 Find their sole voice in that victorious brow.

## REQUIESCAT

STREW on her roses, roses,  
 And never a spray of yew.  
 In quiet she reposes:  
 Ah! would that I did too.

Her mirth the world required:  
She bathed it in smiles of glee.  
But her heart was tired, tired,  
And now they let her be.  
Her life was turning, turning,  
In mazes of heat and sound.  
But for peace her soul was yearning,  
And now peace laps her round.  
Her cabin'd ample Spirit,  
It fluttered and failed for breath.  
To-night it doth inherit  
The vasty Hall of Death.

## SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

AND the first grey of morning filled the east,  
And the fog rose out of the Oxus stream.  
But all the Tartar camp along the stream  
Was hushed, and still the men were plunged in  
sleep:  
Sohrab alone he slept not: all night long  
He had lain wakeful, tossing on his bed;  
But when the grey dawn stole into his tent,  
He rose, and clad himself, and girt his sword,  
And took his horseman's cloak, and left his tent,  
And went abroad into the cold wet fog,  
Through the dim camp to Peran-Wisa's tent.  
Through the black Tartar tents he passed, which  
stood  
Clustering like bee-hives on the low flat strand  
Of Oxus, where the summer floods o'erflow  
When the sun melts the snows in high Pamere:  
Through the black tents he passed, o'er that low  
strand,

And to a hillock came, a little back  
From the stream's brink, the spot where first a boat,  
Crossing the stream in summer, scrapes the land.  
The men of former times had crowned the top  
With a clay fort: but that was fall'n; and now  
The Tartars built there Peran-Wisa's tent,  
A dome of laths, and o'er it felts were spread.  
And Sohrab came there, and went in, and stood  
Upon the thick-piled carpets in the tent,  
And found the old man sleeping on his bed  
Of rugs and felts, and near him lay his arms.  
And Peran-Wisa heard him, though the step  
Was dulled; for he slept light, an old man's sleep;  
And he rose quickly on one arm, and said:—

‘Who art thou? for it is not yet clear dawn.  
Speak! is there news, or any night alarm?’

But Sohrab came to the bedside, and said:—

‘Thou know'st me, Peran-Wisa: it is I.

The sun is not yet risen, and the foe  
Sleep; but I sleep not; all night long I lie  
Tossing and wakeful, and I come to thee.

For so did King Afrasiab bid me seek  
Thy counsel, and to heed thee as thy son,  
In Samarcand, before the army marched;  
And I will tell thee what my heart desires.

Thou knowest if, since from Ader-baijan first  
I came among the Tartars, and bore arms,  
I have still served Afrasiab well, and shown,  
At my boy's years, the courage of a man.

This too thou know'st, that, while I still bear on  
The conquering Tartar ensigns through the world,  
And beat the Persians back on every field,  
I seek one man, one man, and one alone—  
Rustum, my father; who, I hoped, should greet,



Should one day greet, upon some well-fought field,  
His not unworthy, not inglorious son.  
So I long hoped, but him I never find.  
Come then, hear now, and grant me what I ask.  
Let the two armies rest to-day: but I  
Will challenge forth the bravest Persian lords  
To meet me, man to man: if I prevail,  
Rustum will surely hear it; if I fall—  
Old man, the dead need no one, claim no kin.  
Dim is the rumour of a common fight,  
Where host meets host, and many names are sunk:  
But of a single combat Fame speaks clear.'

He spoke: and Peran-Wisa took the hand  
Of the young man in his, and sighed, and said:—  
'O Sohrab, an unquiet heart is thine!  
Canst thou not rest among the Tartar chiefs,  
And share the battle's common chance with us  
Who love thee, but must press for ever first,  
In single fight incurring single risk,  
To find a father thou hast never seen?  
That were far best, my son, to stay with us  
Unmurmuring; in our tents, while it is war,  
And when 'tis truce, then in Afrasiab's towns.  
But, if this one desire indeed rules all,  
To seek out Rustum—seek him not through fight:  
Seek him in peace, and carry to his arms,  
O Sohrab, carry an unwounded son!  
But far hence seek him, for he is not here.  
For now it is not as when I was young,  
When Rustum was in front of every fray:  
But now he keeps apart, and sits at home,  
In Seistan, with Zal, his father old.  
Whether that his own mighty strength at last  
Feels the abhorred approaches of old age;

Or in some quarrel with the Persian King.  
There go;—Thou wilt not? Yet my heart forebodes  
Danger or death awaits thee on this field.  
Fain would I know thee safe and well, though lost  
To us: fain therefore send thee hence, in peace  
To seek thy father, not seek single fights  
In vain:—but who can keep the lion's cub  
From ravening? and who govern Rustum's son?  
Go: I will grant thee what thy heart desires.'

So said he, and dropped Sohrab's hand, and left  
His bed, and the warm rugs whereon he lay,  
And o'er his chilly limbs his woollen coat  
He passed, and tied his sandals on his feet,  
And threw a white cloak round him, and he took  
In his right hand a ruler's staff, no sword;  
And on his head he placed his sheep-skin cap,  
Black, glossy, curled, the fleece of Kara-Kul;  
And raised the curtain of his tent, and called  
His herald to his side, and went abroad.

The sun, by this, had risen, and cleared the fog  
From the broad Oxus and the glittering sands:  
And from their tents the Tartar horsemen filed  
Into the open plain; so Haman bade;  
Haman, who next to Peran-Wisa ruled  
The host, and still was in his lusty prime.  
From their black tents, long files of horse, they  
streamed:

As when, some grey November morn, the files,  
In marching order spread, of long-necked cranes  
Stream over Casbin, and the southern slopes  
Of Elburz, from the Aralian estuaries,  
Or some froze Caspian reed-bed, southward bound  
For the warm Persian sea-board: so they streamed  
The Tartars of the Oxus, the King's guard,

First, with black sheep-skin caps and with long spears;  
Large men, large steeds; who from Bokhara come  
And Khiva, and ferment the milk of mares.  
Next the more temperate Toorkmuns of the south,  
The Tukas, and the lances of Salore,  
And those from Attruck and the Caspian sands;  
Light men, and on light steeds, who only drink  
The acrid milk of camels, and their wells.  
And then a swarm of wandering horse, who came  
From far, and a more doubtful service owned;  
The Tartars of Ferghana, from the banks  
Of the Jaxartes, men with scanty beards  
And close-set skull-caps; and those wilder hordes  
Who roam o'er Kipchak and the northern waste,  
Kalmuks and unkemped Kuzzaks, tribes who stray  
Nearest the Pole, and wandering Kirghizzes,  
Who come on shaggy ponies from Pamere.  
These all filed out from camp into the plain.  
And on the other side the Persians formed:  
First a light cloud of horse, Tartars they seemed,  
The Ilyats of Khorassan: and behind,  
The royal troops of Persia, horse and foot,  
Marshalled battalions bright in burnished steel.  
But Peran-Wisa with his herald came  
Threading the Tartar squadrons to the front,  
And with his staff kept back the foremost ranks.  
And when Ferood, who led the Persians, saw  
That Peran-Wisa kept the Tartars back,  
He took his spear and to the front he came,  
And checked his ranks, and fixed them where they  
stood.

And the old Tartar came upon the sand  
Betwixt the silent hosts, and spake, and said:—  
‘Ferood, and ye, Persians and Tartars, hear!

Let there be truce between the hosts to-day.  
But choose a champion from the Persian lords  
To fight our champion Sohrab, man to man.'

As, in the country, on a morn in June,  
When the dew glistens on the pearled ears,  
A shiver runs through the deep corn for joy—  
So, when they heard what Peran-Wisa said,  
A thrill through all the Tartar squadrons ran  
Of pride and hope for Sohrab, whom they loved.

But as a troop of pedlars, from Cabool,  
Cross underneath the Indian Caucasus,  
That vast sky-neighbouring mountain of milk  
snow;

Winding so high, that, as they mount, they pass  
Long flocks of travelling birds dead on the snow,  
Choked by the air, and scarce can they themselves  
Slake their parched throats with sugared mul-  
berries—

In single file they move, and stop their breath,  
For fear they should dislodge the o'erhanging  
snows—

So the pale Persians held their breath with fear.

And to Ferood his brother Chiefs came up  
To counsel: Gudurz and Zoarrah came,  
And Feraburz, who ruled the Persian host  
Second, and was the uncle of the King:  
These came and counselled; and then Gudurz said:—

'Ferood, shame bids us take their challenge up,  
Yet champion have we none to match this youth.  
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart.  
But Rustum came last night; aloof he sits  
And sullen, and has pitched his tents apart:  
Him will I seek, and carry to his ear  
The Tartar challenge, and this young man's name.

Haply he will forget his wrath, and fight.  
Stand forth the while, and take their challenge up.'

So spake he; and Ferood stood forth and said:—  
'Old man, be it agreed as thou hast said.  
Let Sohrab arm, and we will find a man.'

He spake; and Peran-Wisa turned, and strode  
Back through the opening squadrons to his tent.  
But through the anxious Persians Gudurz ran,  
And crossed the camp which lay behind, and  
reached,

Out on the sands beyond it, Rustum's tents.  
Of scarlet cloth they were, and glittering gay,  
Just pitch'd: the high pavilion in the midst  
Was Rustum's, and his men lay camped around.  
And Gudurz entered Rustum's tent, and found  
Rustum: his morning meal was done, but still  
The table stood beside him, charged with food;  
A side of roasted sheep, and cakes of bread,  
And dark green melons; and there Rustum sate  
Listless, and held a falcon on his wrist,  
And played with it; but Gudurz came and stood  
Before him; and he looked, and saw him stand;  
And with a cry sprang up, and dropped the bird,  
And greeted Gudurz with both hands, and said:—

'Welcome! these eyes could see no better sight.  
What news? but sit down first, and eat and drink.'

But Gudurz stood in the tent door, and said:—  
'Not now: a time will come to eat and drink,  
But not to-day: to-day has other needs.  
The armies are drawn out, and stand at gaze:  
For from the Tartars is a challenge brought  
To pick a champion from the Persian lords  
To fight their champion—and thou know'st his  
name—

Sohrab men call him, but his birth is hid.  
O Rustum, like thy might is this young man's!  
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart.  
And he is young, and Iran's Chiefs are old,  
Or else too weak; and all eyes turn to thee.  
Come down and help us, Rustum, or we lose.'

He spoke: but Rustum answered with a smile:—  
'Go to! if Iran's Chiefs are old, then I  
Am older: if the young are weak, the King  
Errs strangely: for the King, for Kai-Khosroo,  
Himself is young, and honours younger men,  
And lets the agèd moulder to their graves.  
Rustum he loves no more, but loves the young—  
The young may rise at Sohrab's vaunts, not I.  
For what care I, though all speak Sohrab's fame?  
For would that I myself had such a son,  
And not that one slight helpless girl I have,  
A son so famed, so brave, to send to war,  
And I to tarry with the snow-haired Zal,  
My father, whom the robber Afghans vex,  
And clip his borders short, and drive his herds,  
And he has none to guard his weak old age.  
There would I go, and hang my armour up,  
And with my great name fence that weak old man,  
And spend the goodly treasures I have got,  
And rest my age, and hear of Sohrab's fame,  
And leave to death the hosts of thankless kings,  
And with these slaughterous hands draw sword no  
more.'

He spoke, and smiled; and Gudurz made reply:—  
'What then, O Rustum, will men say to this,  
When Sohrab dares our bravest forth, and seeks  
Thee most of all, and thou, whom most he seeks,  
Hidest thy face? Take heed, lest men should say,



*Like some old miser, Rustum hoards his fame,  
And shuns to peril it with younger men.'*

And, greatly moved, then Rustum made reply:—  
'O Gudurz, wherefore dost thou say such words?  
Thou knowest better words than this to say.  
What is one more, one less, obscure or famed,  
Valiant or craven, young or old, to me?  
Are not they mortal, am not I myself?  
But who for men of naught would do great deeds?  
Come, thou shalt see how Rustum hoards his fame.  
But I will fight unknown, and in plain arms;  
Let not men say of Rustum, he was matched  
In single fight with any mortal man.'

He spoke, and frowned; and Gudurz turned, and  
ran

Back quickly through the camp in fear and joy,  
Fear at his wrath, but joy that Rustum came.  
But Rustum strode to his tent door, and called  
His followers in, and bade them bring his arms,  
And clad himself in steel: the arms he chose  
Were plain, and on his shield was no device,  
Only his helm was rich, inlaid with gold,  
And from the fluted spine atop a plume  
Of horsehair waved, a scarlet horsehair plume.  
So armed he issued forth: and Ruksh, his horse,  
Followed him, like a faithful hound, at heel,  
Ruksh, whose renown was noised through all the  
earth,

The horse, whom Rustum on a foray once  
Did in Bokhara by the river find  
A colt beneath its dam, and drove him home,  
And reared him; a bright bay, with lofty crest;  
Dight with a saddle-cloth of brodered green  
Crusted with gold, and on the ground were worked

All beasts of chase, all beasts which hunters know:  
So followed, Rustum left his tents, and crossed  
The camp, and to the Persian host appeared.  
And all the Persians knew him, and with shouts  
Hailed; but the Tartars knew not who he was.  
And dear as the wet diver to the eyes  
Of his pale wife who waits and weeps on shore,  
By sandy Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf,  
Plunging all day in the blue waves, at night,  
Having made up his tale of precious pearls,  
Rejoins her in their hut upon the sands—  
So dear to the pale Persians Rustum came.

And Rustum to the Persian front advanced,  
And Sohrab armed in Haman's tent, and came.  
And as afield the reapers cut a swathe  
Down through the middle of a rich man's corn,  
And on each side are squares of standing corn,  
And in the midst a stubble, short and bare;  
So on each side were squares of men, with spears  
Bristling, and in the midst, the open sand.  
And Rustum came upon the sand, and cast  
His eyes towards the Tartar tents, and saw  
Sohrab come forth, and eyed him as he came.

As some rich woman, on a winter's morn,  
Eyes through her silken curtains the poor drudge  
Who with numb blackened fingers makes her fire—  
At cock-crow, on a starlit winter's morn,  
When the frost flowers the whitened window  
panes—

And wonders how she lives, and what the thoughts  
Of that poor drudge may be; so Rustum eyed  
The unknown venturous Youth, who from afar  
Came seeking Rustum, and defying forth  
All the most valiant chiefs: long he perused



His spirited air, and wondered who he was.  
For very young he seemed, tenderly reared;  
Like some young cypress, tall, and dark, and  
straight,

Which in a queen's secluded garden throws  
Its slight dark shadow on the moonlit turf,  
By midnight, to a bubbling fountain's sound—  
So slender Sohrab seemed, so softly reared.

And a deep pity entered Rustum's soul  
As he beheld him coming; and he stood,  
And beckoned to him with his hand, and said:—

‘O thou young man, the air of Heaven is soft,  
And warm, and pleasant; but the grave is cold.  
Heaven's air is better than the cold dead grave.  
Behold me: I am vast, and clad in iron,  
And tried; and I have stood on many a field  
Of blood, and I have fought with many a foe:  
Never was that field lost, or that foe saved.  
O Sohrab, wherefore wilt thou rush on death?  
Be governed: quit the Tartar host, and come  
To Iran, and be as my son to me,  
And fight beneath my banner till I die.  
There are no youths in Iran brave as thou.’

So he spake, mildly: Sohrab heard his voice,  
The mighty voice of Rustum; and he saw  
His giant figure planted on the sand,  
Sole, like some single tower, which a chief  
Hath builded on the waste in former years  
Against the robbers; and he saw that head,  
Streaked with its first grey hairs: hope filled his soul;  
And he ran forwards and embraced his knees,  
And clasped his hand within his own and said:—

‘Oh, by thy father's head! by thine own soul!  
Art thou not Rustum? Speak! art thou not he?’

But Rustum eyed askance the kneeling youth,  
And turned away, and spake to his own soul:—

‘Ah me, I muse what this young fox may mean.  
False, wily, boastful, are these Tartar boys.

For if I now confess this thing he asks,

And hide it not, but say—*Rustum is here*—

He will not yield indeed, nor quit our foes,

But he will find some pretext not to fight,

And praise my fame, and proffer courteous gifts,

A belt or sword perhaps, and go his way.

And on a feast tide, in Afrasiab’s hall,

In Samarcand, he will arise and cry—

“I challenged once, when the two armies camped  
Beside the Oxus, all the Persian lords

To cope with me in single fight; but they

Shrank; only Rustum dared: then he and I

Changed gifts, and went on equal terms away.”

So will he speak, perhaps, while men applaud.

Then were the chiefs of Iran shamed through me.’

And then he turned, and sternly spake aloud:—

‘Rise! wherefore dost thou vainly question thus

Of Rustum? I am here, whom thou hast called

By challenge forth: make good thy vaunt, or yield.

Is it with Rustum only thou wouldst fight?

Rash boy, men look on Rustum’s face and flee.

For well I know, that did great Rustum stand

Before thy face this day, and were revealed,

There would be then no talk of fighting more.

But being what I am, I tell thee this;

Do thou record it in thine inmost soul:

Either thou shalt renounce thy vaunt, and yield;

Or else thy bones shall strew this sand, till winds

Bleach them, or Oxus with his summer floods,

Oxus in summer wash them all away.’

He spoke: and Sohrab answered, on his feet:—  
'Art thou so fierce? Thou wilt not fright me so.  
I am no girl, to be made pale by words.  
Yet this thou hast said well, did Rustum stand  
Here on this field, there were no fighting then.  
But Rustum is far hence, and we stand here.  
Begin: thou art more vast, more dread than I,  
And thou art proved, I know, and I am young—  
But yet success sways with the breath of Heaven.  
And though thou thinkest that thou knowest sure  
Thy victory, yet thou canst not surely know.  
For we are all, like swimmers in the sea,  
Poised on the top of a huge wave of Fate,  
Which hangs uncertain to which side to fall.  
And whether it will heave us up to land,  
Or whether it will roll us out to sea,  
Back out to sea, to the deep waves of death,  
We know not, and no search will make us know:  
Only the event will teach us in its hour.'

He spoke; and Rustum answered not, but hurled  
His spear: down from the shoulder, down it came,  
As on some partridge in the corn a hawk  
That long has towered in the airy clouds  
Drops like a plummet: Sohrab saw it come,  
And sprang aside, quick as a flash: the spear  
Hissed, and went quivering down into the sand,  
Which it sent flying wide:—then Sohrab threw  
In turn, and full struck Rustum's shield: sharp rang,  
The iron plates rang sharp, but turned the spear.  
And Rustum seized his club, which none but he  
Could wield: an unlopped trunk it was, and huge,  
Still rough; like those which men in treeless plains  
To build them boats fish from the flooded rivers,  
Hyphasis or Hydaspes, when, high up

By their dark springs, the wind in winter-time  
Hath made in Himalayan forests wrack,  
And strewn the channels with torn boughs ; so huge  
The club which Rustum lifted now, and struck  
One stroke ; but again Sohrab sprang aside  
Lithe as the glancing snake, and the club came  
Thundering to earth, and leapt from Rustum's hand.  
And Rustum followed his own blow, and fell  
To his knees, and with his fingers clutched the sand :  
And now might Sohrab have unsheathed his sword,  
And pierced the mighty Rustum while he lay  
Dizzy, and on his knees, and choked with sand :  
But he looked on, and smiled, nor bared his sword,  
But courteously drew back, and spoke, and said :—  
    'Thou strik'st too hard : that club of thine will  
    float

Upon the summer floods, and not my bones.  
But rise, and be not wroth ; not wroth am I :  
No, when I see thee, wrath forsakes my soul.  
Thou say'st thou art not Rustum : be it so.  
Who art thou then, that canst so touch my soul ?  
Boy as I am, I have seen battles too ;  
Have waded foremost in their bloody waves,  
And heard their hollow roar of dying men ;  
But never was my heart thus touched before.  
Are they from Heaven, these softenings of the heart ?  
O thou old warrior, let us yield to Heaven !  
Come, plant we here in earth our angry spears,  
And make a truce, and sit upon this sand,  
And pledge each other in red wine, like friends,  
And thou shalt talk to me of Rustum's deeds.  
There are enough foes in the Persian host  
Whom I may meet, and strike, and feel no pang ;  
Champions enough Afrasiab has, whom thou

Mayst fight; fight them, when they confront thy spear.

But oh, let there be peace 'twixt thee and me!

He ceased: but while he spake, Rustum had risen,  
And stood erect, trembling with rage: his club  
He left to lie, but had regained his spear,  
Whose fiery point now in his mailed right-hand  
Blazed bright and baleful, like that autumn Star,  
The baleful sign of fevers: dust had soiled  
His stately crest, and dimmed his glittering arms.  
His breast heaved; his lips foamed; and twice his  
voice

Was choked with rage: at last these words broke  
way:—

'Girl! nimble with thy feet, not with thy hands!  
Curled minion, dancer, coiner of sweet words!  
Fight; let me hear thy hateful voice no more!  
Thou art not in Afrasiab's gardens now  
With Tartar girls, with whom thou art wont to  
dance;

But on the Oxus sands, and in the dance  
Of battle, and with me, who make no play  
Of war: I fight it out, and hand to hand.  
Speak not to me of truce, and pledge, and wine!  
Remember all thy valour: try thy feints  
And cunning: all the pity I had is gone:  
Because thou hast shamed me before both the hosts  
With thy light skipping tricks, and thy girl's wiles.'

He spoke; and Sohrab kindled at his taunts,  
And he too drew his sword: at once they rushed  
Together, as two eagles on one prey  
Come rushing down together from the clouds,  
One from the east, one from the west: their shields  
Dashed with a clang together, and a din

Rose, such as that the sinewy woodcutters  
Make often in the forest's heart at morn,  
Of hewing axes, crashing trees: such blows  
Rustum and Sohrab on each other hailed.  
And you would say that sun and stars took part  
In that unnatural conflict; for a cloud  
Grew suddenly in Heaven, and darked the sun  
Over the fighters' heads; and a wind rose  
Under their feet, and moaning swept the plain,  
And in a sandy whirlwind wrapped the pair.  
In gloom they twain were wrapped, and they alone;  
For both the on-looking hosts on either hand  
Stood in broad daylight, and the sky was pure,  
And the sun sparkled on the Oxus stream.  
But in the gloom they fought, with bloodshot eyes  
And labouring breath; first Rustum struck the  
shield  
Which Sohrab held stiff out: the steel-spiked spear  
Rent the tough plates, but failed to reach the skin,  
And Rustum plucked it back with angry groan.  
Then Sohrab with his sword smote Rustum's helm,  
Nor clove its steel quite through; but all the crest  
He shore away, and that proud horsehair plume,  
Never till now defiled, sunk to the dust;  
And Rustum bowed his head; but then the gloom  
Grew blacker: thunder rumbled in the air,  
And lightnings rent the cloud; and Ruksh, the  
horse  
Who stood at hand, uttered a dreadful cry:  
No horse's cry was that, most like the roar  
Of some pained desert lion, who all day  
Has trailed the hunter's javelin in his side,  
And comes at night to die upon the sand:—  
The two hosts heard that cry, and quaked for fear,



And Oxus curdled as it crossed his stream.  
But Sohrab heard, and quailed not, but rushed on,  
And struck again; and again Rustum bowed  
His head; but this time all the blade, like glass,  
Sprang in a thousand shivers on the helm,  
And in his hand the hilt remained alone.  
Then Rustum raised his head: his dreadful eyes  
Glared, and he shook on high his menacing spear,  
And shouted, *Rustum!* Sohrab heard that shout,  
And shrank amazed: back he recoiled one step,  
And scanned with blinking eyes the advancing Form:  
And then he stood bewildered; and he dropped  
His covering shield, and the spear pierced his side.  
He reeled, and staggering back, sunk to the ground.  
And then the gloom dispersed, and the wind fell,  
And the bright sun broke forth, and melted all  
The cloud; and the two armies saw the pair;  
Saw Rustum standing, safe upon his feet,  
And Sohrab, wounded, on the bloody sand.

Then, with a bitter smile, Rustum began:—  
‘Sohrab, thou thoughtest in thy mind to kill  
A Persian lord this day, and strip his corpse,  
And bear thy trophies to Afrasiab’s tent.  
Or else that the great Rustum would come down  
Himself to fight, and that thy wiles would move  
His heart to take a gift, and let thee go.  
And then that all the Tartar host would praise  
Thy courage or thy craft, and spread thy fame,  
To glad thy father in his weak old age.  
Fool! thou art slain, and by an unknown man!  
Dearer to the red jackals shalt thou be,  
Than to thy friends, and to thy father old.’

And with a fearless mien Sohrab replied:—  
‘Unknown thou art; yet thy fierce vaunt is vain.

Thou dost not slay me, proud and boastful man!  
No! Rustum slays me, and this filial heart.  
For were I matched with ten such men as thou,  
And I were he who till to-day I was,  
They should be lying here, I standing there.  
But that beloved name unnerved my arm—  
That name, and something, I confess, in thee,  
Which troubles all my heart, and made my shield  
Fall; and thy spear transfixed an unarmed foe.  
And now thou boastest, and insult'st my fate.  
But hear thou this, fierce Man, tremble to hear!  
The mighty Rustum shall avenge my death!  
My father, whom I seek through all the world,  
He shall avenge my death, and punish thee!'

As when some hunter in the spring hath found  
A breeding eagle sitting on her nest,  
Upon the craggy isle of a hill lake,  
And pierced her with an arrow as she rose,  
And followed her to find her where she fell  
Far off; —anon her mate comes winging back  
From hunting, and a great way off descries  
His huddling young left sole; at that, he checks  
His pinion, and with short uneasy sweeps  
Circles above his eyry, with loud screams  
Chiding his mate back to her nest; but she  
Lies dying, with the arrow in her side,  
In some far stony gorge out of his ken,  
A heap of fluttering feathers: never more  
Shall the lake glass her, flying over it;  
Never the black and dripping precipices  
Echo her stormy scream as she sails by:—  
As that poor bird flies home, nor knows his loss—  
So Rustum knew not his own loss, but stood  
Over his dying son, and knew him not.



But with a cold, incredulous voice, he said:—  
'What prate is this of fathers and revenge?  
The mighty Rustum never had a son.'

And, with a failing voice, Sohrab replied:—  
'Ah yes, he had! and that lost son am I.  
Surely the news will one day reach his ear,  
Reach Rustum, where he sits, and tarries long,  
Somewhere, I know not where, but far from here;  
And pierce him like a stab, and make him leap  
To arms, and cry for vengeance upon thee.  
Fierce Man, bethink thee, for an only son!  
What will that grief, what will that vengeance be!  
Oh, could I live, till I that grief had seen!  
Yet him I pity not so much, but her,  
My mother, who in Ader-baijan dwells  
With that old King, her father, who grows grey  
With age, and rules over the valiant Koords.  
Her most I pity, who no more will see  
Sohrab returning from the Tartar camp,  
With spoils and honour, when the war is done.  
But a dark rumour will be bruited up,  
From tribe to tribe, until it reach her ear;  
And then will that defenceless woman learn  
That Sohrab will rejoice her sight no more;  
But that in battle with a nameless foe,  
By the far distant Oxus, he is slain.'

He spoke; and as he ceased he wept aloud,  
Thinking of her he left, and his own death.  
He spoke; but Rustum listened, plunged in thought.  
Nor did he yet believe it was his son  
Who spoke, although he called back names he knew;  
For he had had sure tidings that the babe,  
Which was in Ader-baijan born to him,  
Had been a puny girl, no boy at all:

So that sad mother sent him word, for fear  
Rustum should take the boy, to train in arms;  
And so he deemed that either Sohrab took,  
By a false boast, the style of Rustum's son;  
Or that men gave it him, to swell his fame.  
So deemed he; yet he listened, plunged in thought;  
And his soul set to grief, as the vast tide  
Of the bright rocking Ocean sets to shore  
At the full moon: tears gathered in his eyes;  
For he remembered his own early youth,  
And all its bounding rapture; as, at dawn,  
The Shepherd from his mountain lodge describes  
A far bright City, smitten by the sun,  
Through many rolling clouds;—so Rustum saw  
His youth; saw Sohrab's mother, in her bloom;  
And that old King, her father, who loved well  
His wandering guest, and gave him his fair child  
With joy; and all the pleasant life they led,  
They three, in that long-distant summer-time—  
The castle, and the dewy woods, and hunt  
And hound, and morn on those delightful hills  
In Ader-baijan. And he saw that Youth,  
Of age and looks to be his own dear son,  
Piteous and lovely, lying on the sand,  
Like some rich hyacinth, which by the scythe  
Of an unskilful gardener has been cut,  
Mowing the garden grass-plots near its bed,  
And lies, a fragrant tower of purple bloom,  
On the mown, dying grass;—so Sohrab lay,  
Lovely in death, upon the common sand.  
And Rustum gazed on him with grief, and said:—  
‘O Sohrab, thou indeed art such a son  
Whom Rustum, wert thou his, might well have  
loved!

Yet here thou errest, Sohrab, or else men  
Have told thee false;—thou art not Rustum's son.  
For Rustum had no son: one child he had—  
But one—a girl: who with her mother now  
Plies some light female task, nor dreams of us—  
Of us she dreams not, nor of wounds, nor war.'

But Sohrab answered him in wrath; for now  
The anguish of the deep-fixed spear grew fierce,  
And he desired to draw forth the steel,  
And let the blood flow free, and so to die;  
But first he would convince his stubborn foe—  
And, rising sternly on one arm, he said:—

'Man, who art thou who dost deny my words?  
Truth sits upon the lips of dying men,  
And Falsehood, while I lived, was far from mine.  
I tell thee, pricked upon this arm I bear  
That seal which Rustum to my mother gave,  
That she might prick it on the babe she bore.'

He spoke: and all the blood left Rustum's cheeks;  
And his knees tottered, and he smote his hand  
Against his breast, his heavy mailed hand,  
That the hard iron corslet clanked aloud:  
And to his heart he pressed the other hand,  
And in a hollow voice he spake, and said:—

'Sohrab, that were a proof which could not lie.  
If thou shew this, then art thou Rustum's son.'

Then, with weak hasty fingers, Sohrab loosed  
His belt, and near the shoulder bared his arm,  
And shewed a sign in faint vermilion points  
Pricked: as a cunning workman, in Pekin,  
Pricks with vermilion some clear porcelain vase,  
An emperor's gift—at early morn he paints,  
And all day long, and, when night comes, the lamp  
Lights up his studious forehead and thin hands:—

So delicately pricked the sign appeared  
On Sohrab's arm, the sign of Rustum's seal.  
It was that Griffin, which of old reared Zal,  
Rustum's great father, whom they left to die,  
A helpless babe, among the mountain rocks.  
Him that kind creature found, and reared, and loved—  
Then Rustum took it for his glorious sign.  
And Sohrab bared that figure on his arm,  
And himself scanned it long with mournful eyes,  
And then he touched it with his hand and said:—  
'How say'st thou? Is that sign the proper sign  
Of Rustum's son, or of some other man's?'

He spoke: but Rustum gazed, and gazed, and stood  
Speechless; and then he uttered one sharp cry—  
*O Boy—thy Father!*—and his voice choked there.  
And then a dark cloud passed before his eyes,  
And his head swam, and he sunk down to earth.  
But Sohrab crawled to where he lay, and cast  
His arms about his neck, and kissed his lips,  
And with fond faltering fingers stroked his cheeks,  
Trying to call him back to life: and life  
Came back to Rustum, and he op'd his eyes  
And they stood wide with horror; and he seized  
In both his hands the dust which lay around,  
And threw it on his head, and smirched his hair,  
His hair, and face, and beard, and glittering arms:  
And strong convulsive groanings shook his breast,  
And his sobs choked him; and he clutched his sword,  
To draw it, and for ever let life out.  
But Sohrab saw his thought, and held his hands,  
And with a soothing voice he spoke, and said:—  
'Father, forbear: for I but meet to-day  
The doom that at my birth was written down  
In Heaven, and thou art Heaven's unconscious hand.

Surely my heart cried out that it was thou,  
When first I saw thee; and thy heart spoke too,  
I know it: but fate trod those promptings down  
Under its iron heel; Fate, Fate engaged  
The strife, and hurled me on my father's spear.  
But let us speak no more of this: I find  
My father; let me feel that I have found.  
Come, sit beside me on this sand, and take  
My head betwixt thy hands, and kiss my cheeks,  
And wash them with thy tears, and say, *My Son!*  
Quick! quick! for numbered are my sands of life,  
And swift; for like the lightning to this field  
I came, and like the wind I go away—  
Sudden, and swift, and like a passing wind.  
But it was writ in Heaven that this should be.'

So said he: and his voice released the heart  
Of Rustum, and his tears broke forth; he cast  
His arms round his son's neck, and wept aloud,  
And kissed him. And awe fell on both the hosts  
When they saw Rustum's grief: and Ruksh, the  
horse,

With his head bowing to the ground, and mane  
Sweeping the dust, came near, and in mute woe  
First to the one then to the other moved  
His head, as if enquiring what their grief  
Might mean; and from his dark, compassionate eyes,  
The big warm tears rolled down, and caked the sand.  
But Rustum chid him with stern voice, and said:—

'Ruksh, now thou grieveest; but, O Ruksh, thy feet  
Should then have rotted on their nimble joints,  
When first they bore thy Master to this field.'

But Sohrab looked upon the horse and said:—  
'Is this then Ruksh? How often, in past days,  
My mother told me of thee, thou brave steed!

My terrible father's terrible horse; and said,  
That I should one day find thy lord and thee.  
Come, let me lay my hand upon thy mane.  
O Ruksh, thou art more fortunate than I;  
For thou hast gone where I shall never go,  
And snuffed the breezes of my father's home.  
And thou hast trod the sands of Seistan,  
And seen the River of Helmund, and the Lake  
Of Zirrah; and the aged Zal himself  
Has often stroked thy neck, and given thee food,  
Corn in a golden platter soaked with wine,  
And said—"O Ruksh! bear Rustum well!"—but I  
Have never known my grandsire's furrowed face,  
Nor seen his lofty house in Seistan,  
Nor slaked my thirst at the clear Helmund stream:  
But lodged among my father's foes, and seen  
Afrasiab's cities only, Samarcand,  
Bokhara, and lone Khiva in the waste,  
And the black Toorkmun tents; and only drunk  
The desert rivers, Moorghab and Tejend,  
Kohik, and where the Kalmuks feed their sheep,  
The northern Sir; and this great Oxus stream—  
The yellow Oxus, by whose brink I die.'

And, with a heavy groan, Rustum replied:—  
'Oh that its waves were flowing over me!  
Oh that I saw its grains of yellow silt  
Roll tumbling in the current o'er my head!'

And, with a grave mild voice, Sohrab replied:—  
'Desire not that, my father; thou must live.  
For some are born to do great deeds, and live,  
As some are born to be obscured, and die.  
Do thou the deeds I die too young to do,  
And reap a second glory in thine age.  
Thou art my father, and thy gain is mine.



But come: thou seest this great host of men  
Which follow me; I pray thee, slay not these:  
Let me entreat for them: what have they done?  
They followed me, my hope, my fame, my star.  
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.  
But me thou must bear hence, not send with them,  
But carry me with thee to Seistan,  
And place me on a bed, and mourn for me,  
Thou, and the snow-haired Zal, and all thy friends.  
And thou must lay me in that lovely earth,  
And heap a stately mound above my bones,  
And plant a far-seen pillar over all:  
That so the passing horseman on the waste  
May see my tomb a great way off, and say—  
*Sohrab, the mighty Rustum's son, lies there,*  
*Whom his great father did in ignorance kill—*  
And I be not forgotten in my grave.'

And, with a mournful voice, Rustum replied:—  
'Fear not; as thou hast said, Sohrab, my son,  
So shall it be: for I will burn my tents,  
And quit the host, and bear thee hence with me,  
And carry thee away to Seistan,  
And place thee on a bed, and mourn for thee,  
With the snow-headed Zal, and all my friends.  
And I will lay thee in that lovely earth,  
And heap a stately mound above thy bones,  
And plant a far-seen pillar over all:  
And men shall not forget thee in thy grave.  
And I will spare thy host: yea, let them go:  
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.  
What should I do with slaying any more?  
For would that all whom I have ever slain  
Might be once more alive; my bitterest foes,  
And they who were called champions in their time,

And through whose death I won that fame I have ;  
And I were nothing but a common man,  
A poor, mean soldier, and without renown ;  
So thou mightest live too, my Son, my Son,  
Or rather would that I, even I myself,  
Might now be lying on this bloody sand,  
Near death, and by an ignorant stroke of thine,  
Not thou of mine ; and I might die, not thou ;  
And I, not thou, be borne to Seistan ;  
And Zal might weep above my grave, not thine ;  
And say—*O son, I weep thee not too sore,  
For willingly, I know, thou met'st thine end.*—  
But now in blood and battles was my youth,  
And full of blood and battles is my age ;  
And I shall never end this life of blood.'

Then, at the point of death, Sohrab replied:—  
'A life of blood indeed, thou dreadful Man!  
But thou shalt yet have peace ; only not now ;  
Not yet: but thou shalt have it on that day,  
When thou shalt sail in a high-masted Ship,  
Thou and the other peers of Kai-Khosroo,  
Returning home over the salt blue sea,  
From laying thy dear Master in his grave.'

And Rustum gazed on Sohrab's face, and said:—  
'Soon be that day, my son, and deep that sea!  
Till then, if Fate so wills, let me endure.'

He spoke ; and Sohrab smiled on him, and took  
The spear, and drew it from his side, and eased  
His wound's imperious anguish: but the blood  
Came welling from the open gash, and life  
Flowed with the stream: all down his cold white side  
The crimson torrent ran, dim now, and soiled,  
Like the soiled tissue of white violets  
Left, freshly gathered, on their native bank,



By romping children, whom their nurses call  
From the hot fields at noon: his head drooped low,  
His limbs grew slack; motionless, white, he lay—  
White, with eyes closed; only when heavy gasps,  
Deep, heavy gasps, quivering through all his frame,  
Convulsed him back to life, he opened them,  
And fixed them feebly on his father's face:  
Till now all strength was ebb'd, and from his  
limbs

Unwillingly the spirit fled away,  
Regretting the warm mansion which it left,  
And youth and bloom, and this delightful world.

So, on the bloody sand, Sohrab lay dead.  
And the great Rustum drew his horseman's cloak  
Down o'er his face, and sate by his dead son.  
As those black granite pillars, once high-reared  
By Jemshid in Persepolis, to bear  
His house, now, mid their broken flights of steps,  
Lie prone, enormous, down the mountain side—  
So in the sand lay Rustum by his son.

And night came down over the solemn waste,  
And the two gazing hosts, and that sole pair,  
And darkened all; and a cold fog, with night,  
Crept from the Oxus. Soon a hum arose,  
As of a great assembly loosed, and fires  
Began to twinkle through the fog: for now  
Both armies moved to camp, and took their meal:  
The Persians took it on the open sands  
Southward; the Tartars by the river marge:  
And Rustum and his son were left alone.

But the majestic river floated on,  
Out of the mist and hum of that low land,  
Into the frosty starlight, and there moved,  
Rejoicing, through the hushed Chorasman waste,

Under the solitary moon: he flowed  
Right for the Polar Star, past Orgunjè,  
Brimming, and bright, and large: then sands begin  
To hem his watery march, and dam his streams,  
And split his currents; that for many a league  
The shorn and parcelled Oxus strains along  
Through beds of sand and matted rushy isles—  
Oxus, forgetting the bright speed he had  
In his high mountain cradle in Pamere,  
A foiled circuitous wanderer:—till at last  
The longed-for dash of waves is heard, and wide  
His luminous home of waters opens, bright  
And tranquil, from whose floor the new-bathed stars  
Emerge, and shine upon the Aral Sea.

#### THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

COME, dear children, let us away;  
Down and away below.  
Now my brothers call from the bay;  
Now the great winds shoreward blow;  
Now the salt tides seaward flow;  
Now the wild white horses play,  
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.  
Children dear, let us away.  
This way, this way.

Call her once before you go.  
Call once yet.  
In a voice that she will know:  
'Margaret! Margaret!'  
Children's voices should be dear  
(Call once more) to a mother's ear:  
Children's voices, wild with pain.  
Surely she will come again.

Call her once and come away.  
This way, this way.  
'Mother dear, we cannot stay.'  
The wild white horses foam and fret.  
Margaret! Margaret!

Come, dear children, come away down.  
Call no more.  
One last look at the white-walled town,  
And the little grey church on the windy shore.  
Then come down.  
She will not come though you call all day.  
Come away, come away.

Children dear, was it yesterday  
We heard the sweet bells over the bay?  
In the caverns where we lay,  
Through the surf and through the swell,  
The far-off sound of a silver bell?  
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,  
Where the winds are all asleep;  
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam;  
Where the salt weed sways in the stream;  
Where the sea-beasts ranged all round  
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground;  
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,  
Dry their mail and bask in the brine;  
Where great whales come sailing by,  
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,  
Round the world for ever and aye?  
When did music come this way?  
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday  
(Call yet once) that she went away?

Once she sate with you and me,  
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,  
And the youngest sate on her knee.  
She combed its bright hair, and she tended it well,  
When down swung the sound of the far-off bell.  
She sighed, she looked up through the clear green sea.  
She said ; ' I must go, for my kinsfolk pray  
In the little grey church on the shore to-day.  
'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah me!  
And I lose my poor soul, Merman, here with thee.'  
I said ; ' Go up, dear heart, through the waves ;  
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-caves.'  
She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.  
Children dear, was it yesterday ?

Children dear, were we long alone ?  
'The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan.  
Long prayers,' I said, 'in the world they say.  
Come,' I said, and we rose through the surf in the  
bay.  
We went up the beach, by the sandy down  
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-walled  
town.  
Through the narrow paved streets, where all was still,  
To the little grey church on the windy hill.  
From the church came a murmur of folk at their  
prayers,  
But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.  
We climbed on the graves, on the stones, worn with  
rains,  
And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded  
panes.  
She sate by the pillar ; we saw her clear :  
'Margaret, hist ! come quick, we are here.

Dear heart,' I said, 'we are long alone.  
The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan.'  
But, ah, she gave me never a look,  
For her eyes were sealed to the holy book.  
Loud prays the priest; shut stands the door.  
Come away, children, call no more.  
Come away, come down, call no more.

Down, down, down.  
Down to the depths of the sea.  
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,  
Singing most joyfully.  
Hark, what she sings; 'O joy, O joy,  
For the humming street, and the child with its toy.  
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well.  
For the wheel where I spun,  
And the blessed light of the sun.'  
And so she sings her fill,  
Singing most joyfully,  
Till the shuttle falls from her hand,  
And the whizzing wheel stands still.  
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand;  
And over the sand at the sea;  
And her eyes are set in a stare;  
And anon there breaks a sigh,  
And anon there drops a tear,  
From a sorrow-clouded eye,  
And a heart sorrow-laden,  
A long, long sigh,  
For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaiden,  
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away children.  
Come children, come down.  
The hoarse wind blows colder;

Lights shine in the town.  
She will start from her slumber  
When gusts shake the door;  
She will hear the winds howling,  
Will hear the waves roar.  
We shall see, while above us  
The waves roar and whirl,  
A ceiling of amber,  
A pavement of pearl.  
Singing, 'Here came a mortal,  
But faithless was she.  
And alone dwell for ever  
The kings of the sea.'

But, children, at midnight,  
When soft the winds blow;  
When clear falls the moonlight;  
When spring-tides are low:  
When sweet airs come seaward  
From heaths starred with broom;  
And high rocks throw mildly  
On the blanched sands a gloom:  
Up the still, glistening beaches,  
Up the creeks we will hie;  
Over banks of bright seaweed  
The ebb-tide leaves dry.  
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,  
At the white, sleeping town;  
At the church on the hill-side—  
And then come back down.  
Singing, 'There dwells a loved one,  
But cruel is she.  
She left lonely for ever  
The kings of the sea.'

## A SUMMER NIGHT

IN the deserted moon-blanchèd street  
 How lonely rings the echo of my feet!  
 Those windows, which I gaze at, frown,  
 Silent and white, unopening down,  
 Repellent as the world:—but see!  
 A break between the housetops shows  
 The moon, and, lost behind her, fading dim  
 Into the dewy dark obscurity  
 Down at the far horizon's rim,  
 Doth a whole tract of heaven disclose.

And to my mind the thought  
 Is on a sudden brought  
 Of a past night, and a far different scene.  
 Headlands stood out into the moon-lit deep  
 As clearly as at noon;  
 The spring-tide's brimming flow  
 Heaved dazzlingly between;  
 Houses with long white sweep  
 Girdled the glistening bay:  
 Behind, through the soft air,  
 The blue haze-cradled mountains spread away.  
 That night was far more fair;  
 But the same restless pacings to and fro,  
 And the same vainly-throbbing heart was there,  
 And the same bright calm moon.

And the calm moonlight seems to say—  
 —‘Hast thou then still the old unquiet breast  
 That neither deadens into rest  
 Nor ever feels the fiery glow  
 That whirls the spirit from itself away,

But fluctuates to and fro  
Never by passion quite possessed  
And never quite benumbed by the world's sway ?'—  
And I, I know not if to pray  
Still to be what I am, or yield, and be  
Like all the other men I see.

For most men in a brazen prison live,  
Where in the sun's hot eye,  
With heads bent o'er their toil, they languidly  
Their lives to some unmeaning taskwork give,  
Dreaming of naught beyond their prison wall.  
And as, year after year,  
Fresh products of their barren labour fall  
From their tired hands, and rest  
Never yet comes more near,  
Gloom settles slowly down over their breast.  
And while they try to stem  
The waves of mournful thought by which they are  
    prest,  
Death in their prison reaches them  
Unfreed, having seen nothing, still unblest.

And the rest, a few,  
Escape their prison, and depart  
On the wide Ocean of Life anew.  
There the freed prisoner, where'er his heart  
Listeth, will sail;  
Nor does he know how there prevail,  
Despotic on life's sea,  
Trade-winds that cross it from eternity.

    Awhile he holds some false way, undebarr'd  
By thwarting signs, and braves  
The freshening wind and blackening waves.



And then the tempest strikes him, and between  
The lightning bursts is seen  
Only a driving wreck,  
And the pale master on his spar-strewn deck  
With anguished face and flying hair  
Grasping the rudder hard,  
Still bent to make some port he knows not where,  
Still standing for some false impossible shore.

And sterner comes the roar  
Of sea and wind, and through the deepening gloom  
Fainter and fainter wreck and helmsman loom,  
And he too disappears, and comes no more.

Is there no life, but these alone?  
Madman or slave, must man be one?

Plainness and clearness without shadow of stain!  
Clearness divine!

Ye Heavens, whose pure dark regions have no sign  
Of languor, though so calm, and though so great  
Are yet untroubled and unpassionate:  
Who, though so noble, share in the world's toil,  
And though so tasked, keep free from dust and  
soil:

I will not say that your mild deeps retain  
A tinge, it may be, of their silent pain  
Who have longed deeply once, and longed in vain;  
But I will rather say that you remain  
A world above man's head, to let him see  
How boundless might his soul's horizons be,  
How vast, yet of what clear transparency.  
How it were good to sink there, and breathe free.  
How fair a lot to fill  
Is left to each man still.

## THE SCHOLAR GIPSY

Go, for they call you, Shepherd, from the hill;  
Go, Shepherd, and untie the wattled cotes:  
No longer leave thy wistful flock unfed,  
Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their throats,  
Nor the cropped grasses shoot another head.  
But when the fields are still,  
And the tired men and dogs all gone to rest,  
And only the white sheep are sometimes seen  
Cross and recross the strips of moon-blanch'd  
green;  
Come, Shepherd, and again renew the quest.  
Here, where the reaper was at work of late,  
In this high field's dark corner, where he leaves  
His coat, his basket, and his earthen cruse,  
And in the sun all morning binds the sheaves,  
Then here, at noon, comes back his stores to use;  
Here will I sit and wait,  
While to my ear from uplands far away  
The bleating of the folded flocks is borne,  
With distant cries of reapers in the corn—  
All the live murmur of a summer's day.  
Screened is this nook o'er the high, half-reaped field,  
And here till sun-down, Shepherd, will I be.  
Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep,  
And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see  
Pale blue convolvulus in tendrils creep:  
And air-swept lindens yield  
Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed  
showers  
Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,  
And bower me from the August sun with shade;  
And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers:

And near me on the grass lies Glanvil's book—  
Come, let me read the oft-read tale again,  
The story of that Oxford scholar poor  
Of pregnant parts and quick inventive brain,  
Who, tired of knocking at Preferment's door,  
One summer morn forsook  
His friends, and went to learn the Gipsy lore,  
And roamed the world with that wild brother-  
hood,  
And came, as most men deemed, to little good,  
But came to Oxford and his friends no more.

But once, years after, in the country lanes,  
Two scholars, whom at college erst he knew,  
Met him, and of his way of life inquired.  
Whereat he answered, that the Gipsy crew,  
His mates, had arts to rule as they desired  
The workings of men's brains;  
And they can bind them to what thoughts they  
will:  
'And I,' he said, 'the secret of their art,  
When fully learned, will to the world impart:  
But it needs heaven-sent moments for this skill.'

This said, he left them, and returned no more,  
But rumours hung about the country-side,  
That the lost Scholar long was seen to stray,  
Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and tongue-tied,  
In hat of antique shape, and cloak of grey,  
The same the Gipsies wore.  
Shepherds had met him on the Hurst in spring;  
At some lone alehouse in the Berkshire moors,  
On the warm ingle-bench, the smock-frocked  
boors  
Had found him seated at their entering,

But, 'mid their drink and clatter, he would fly:  
And I myself seem half to know thy looks,  
And put the shepherds, Wanderer, on thy trace;  
And boys who in lone wheatfields scare the rooks  
I ask if thou hast passed their quiet place;  
Or in my boat I lie  
Moored to the cool bank in the summer heats,  
'Mid wide grass meadows which the sunshine fills,  
And watch the warm green-muffled Cumner hills,  
And wonder if thou haunt'st their shy retreats.

For most, I know, thou lov'st retirèd ground.  
Thee, at the ferry, Oxford riders blithe,  
Returning home on summer nights, have met  
Crossing the stripling Thames at Bablock-hithe,  
Trailing in the cool stream thy fingers wet,  
As the slow punt swings round:  
And leaning backwards in a pensive dream,  
And fostering in thy lap a heap of flowers  
Plucked in shy fields and distant Wychwood  
bowers,  
And thine eyes resting on the moonlit stream:

And then they land, and thou art seen no more.  
Maidens who from the distant hamlets come  
To dance around the Fyfield elm in May,  
Oft through the darkening fields have seen thee  
roam,  
Or cross a stile into the public way.  
Oft thou hast given them store  
Of flowers—the frail-leaved, white anemone—  
Dark bluebells drenched with dew of summer  
eves,  
And purple orchises with spotted leaves—  
But none has words she can report of thee.

And, above Godstow Bridge, when hay-time 's here  
In June, and many a scythe in sunshine flames,  
Men who through those wide fields of breezy  
grass  
Where black-winged swallows haunt the glitter-  
ing Thames,  
To bathe in the abandoned lasher pass,  
Have often passed thee near  
Sitting upon the river bank o'ergrown:  
Marked thine outlandish garb, thy figure spare,  
Thy dark vague eyes, and soft abstracted air;  
But, when they came from bathing, thou wert gone.

At some lone homestead in the Cumner hills,  
Where at her open door the housewife darns,  
Thou hast been seen, or hanging on a gate  
To watch the threshers in the mossy barns.  
Children, who early range these slopes and late  
For cresses from the rills,  
Have known thee watching, all an April day,  
The springing pastures and the feeding kine;  
And marked thee, when the stars come out and  
shine,  
Through the long dewy grass move slow away.

In autumn, on the skirts of Bagley wood,  
Where most the Gipsies by the turf-edged way  
Pitch their smoked tents, and every bush you see  
With scarlet patches tagged and shreds of grey,  
Above the forest-ground called Thessaly—  
The blackbird picking food  
Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears at all;  
So often has he known thee past him stray  
Rapt, twirling in thy hand a withered spray,  
And waiting for the spark from Heaven to fall.

And once, in winter, on the causeway chill  
Where home through flooded fields foot-travellers  
go,  
Have I not passed thee on the wooden bridge  
Wrapt in thy cloak and battling with the snow,  
Thy face towards Hinksey and its wintry ridge?  
And thou hast climbed the hill  
And gained the white brow of the Cumner range;  
Turned once to watch, while thick the snow-  
flakes fall,  
The line of festal light in Christ Church hall—  
Then sought thy straw in some sequestered grange.  
But what—I dream! Two hundred years are flown  
Since first thy story ran through Oxford halls,  
And the grave Glanvil did the tale inscribe  
That thou wert wandered from the studious walls  
To learn strange arts, and join a Gipsy tribe:  
And thou from earth art gone  
Long since, and in some quiet churchyard laid;  
Some country nook, where o'er thy unknown  
grave  
Tall grasses and white flowering nettles wave—  
Under a dark red-fruited yew-tree's shade.  
—No, no, thou hast not felt the lapse of hours.  
For what wears out the life of mortal men?  
'Tis that from change to change their being rolls:  
'Tis that repeated shocks, again, again,  
Exhaust the energy of strongest souls,  
And numb the elastic powers.  
Till having used our nerves with bliss and teen,  
And tired upon a thousand schemes our wit,  
To the just-pausing Genius we remit  
Our worn-out life, and are—what we have been.

Thou hast not lived, why shouldst thou perish, so ?  
Thou hadst *one* aim, *one* business, *one* desire:

Else wert thou long since numbered with the  
dead—

Else hadst thou spent, like other men, thy fire.

The generations of thy peers are fled,

And we ourselves shall go ;

But thou possessest an immortal lot,

And we imagine thee exempt from age

And living as thou liv'st on Glanvil's page,

Because thou hadst—what we, alas, have not!

For early didst thou leave the world, with powers  
Fresh, undiverted to the world without,

Firm to their mark, not spent on other things ;

Free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt,

Which much to have tried, in much been  
baffled, brings.

O Life unlike to ours!

Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,

Of whom each strives, nor knows for what he  
strives,

And each half lives a hundred different lives ;

Who wait like thee, but not, like thee, in hope.

Thou waitest for the spark from Heaven: and we,  
Vague half-believers of our casual creeds,

Who never deeply felt, nor clearly willed,

Whose insight never has borne fruit in deeds,

Whose weak resolves never have been fulfilled ;

For whom each year we see

Breeds new beginnings, disappointments new ;

Who hesitate and falter life away,

And lose to-morrow the ground won to-day—

Ah, do not we, Wanderer, await it too ?



Yes, we await it, but it still delays,  
And then we suffer ; and amongst us one,  
Who most has suffered, takes dejectedly  
His seat upon the intellectual throne ;  
And all his store of sad experience he  
Lays bare of wretched days ;  
Tells us his misery's birth and growth and signs,  
And how the dying spark of hope was fed,  
And how the breast was soothed, and how the  
head,  
And all his hourly varied anodynes.

This for our wisest : and we others pine,  
And wish the long unhappy dream would end,  
And waive all claim to bliss, and try to bear,  
With close-lipped Patience for our only friend,  
Sad Patience, too near neighbour to Despair :  
But none has hope like thine.  
Thou through the fields and through the woods  
dost stray,  
Roaming the country-side, a truant boy,  
Nursing thy project in unclouded joy,  
And every doubt long blown by time away.

O born in days when wits were fresh and clear,  
And life ran gaily as the sparkling Thames ;  
Before this strange disease of modern life,  
With its sick hurry, its divided aims,  
Its heads o'ertaxed, its palsied hearts, was  
rife—

Fly hence, our contact fear !  
Still fly, plunge deeper in the bowering wood  
Averse, as Dido did with gesture stern  
From her false friend's approach in Hades turn,  
Wave us away, and keep thy solitude.



Still nursing the unconquerable hope,  
Still clutching the inviolable shade,  
    With a free onward impulse brushing through,  
By night, the silvered branches of the glade—  
    Far on the forest skirts, where none pursue,  
    On some mild pastoral slope  
Emerge, and resting on the moonlit pales,  
    Freshen thy flowers, as in former years,  
    With dew, or listen with enchanted ears,  
From the dark dingles, to the nightingales.

But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly!  
For strong the infection of our mental strife,  
    Which, though it gives no bliss, yet spoils for  
    rest;  
And we should win thee from thy own fair life,  
    Like us distracted, and like us unblest.  
    Soon, soon thy cheer would die,  
Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfixed thy  
    powers,  
And thy clear aims be cross and shifting made:  
And then thy glad perennial youth would fade,  
Fade, and grow old at last, and die like ours.

Then fly our greetings, fly our speech and smiles!  
—As some grave Tyrian trader, from the sea,  
    Descried at sunrise an emerging prow  
Lifting the cool-haired creepers stealthily,  
    The fringes of a southward-facing brow  
    Among the Ægean isles;  
And saw the merry Grecian coaster come,  
    Freighted with amber grapes, and Chian wine,  
    Green bursting figs, and tunnies steeped in  
    brine;  
And knew the intruders on his ancient home,

The young light-hearted Masters of the waves;  
 And snatched his rudder, and shook out more  
 sail,  
 And day and night held on indignantly  
 O'er the blue Midland waters with the gale,  
 Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily,  
 To where the Atlantic raves  
 Outside the Western Straits, and unbent sails  
 There, where down cloudy cliffs, through  
 sheets of foam,  
 Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come;  
 And on the beach undid his corded bales.

### THYRSIS

A MONODY, *to commemorate the author's friend,*  
 ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH, *who died at Florence,*  
 1861.

Thus yesterday, to-day, to-morrow come,  
 They hustle one another and they pass;  
 But all our hustling morrows only make  
 The smooth to-day of God.

*From* LUCRETIVS, *an unpublished Tragedy.*

How changed is here each spot man makes or fills!  
 In the two Hinkseys nothing keeps the same;  
 The village-street its haunted mansion lacks,  
 And from the sign is gone Sibylla's name,  
 And from the roofs the twisted chimney-stacks;  
 Are ye too changed, ye hills?  
 See, 'tis no foot of unfamiliar men  
 To-night from Oxford up your pathway strays;  
 Here came I often, often, in old days;  
 Thyrsis and I; we still had Thyrsis then.

Runs it not here, the track by Childsworth Farm,  
Up past the wood, to where the elm-tree crowns  
The hill behind whose ridge the sunset flames?  
The signal-elm, that looks on Ilsley Downs,  
The Vale, the three lone weirs, the youthful  
Thames?—

This winter-eve is warm,  
Humid the air; leafless, yet soft as spring,  
The tender purple spray on copse and briers;  
And that sweet City with her dreaming spires,  
She needs not June for beauty's heightening,

Lovely all times she lies, lovely to-night!  
Only, methinks, some loss of habit's power  
Befalls me wandering through this upland dim;  
Once passed I blindfold here, at any hour,  
Now seldom come I, since I came with him.  
That single elm-tree bright  
Against the west—I miss it! is it gone?  
We prized it dearly; while it stood, we said,  
Our friend, the Scholar-Gipsy, was not dead;  
While the tree lived, he in these fields lived on.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here!  
But once I knew each field, each flower, each  
stick;  
And with the country-folk acquaintance made  
By barn in threshing-time, by new-built rick.  
Here, too, our shepherd-pipes we first assayed.  
Ah me! this many a year  
My pipe is lost, my shepherd's-holiday!  
Needs must I lose them, needs with heavy heart  
Into the world and wave of men depart;  
But Thyrsis of his own will went away.

It irked him to be here, he could not rest.

He loved each simple joy the country yields,

He loved his mates ; but yet he could not keep,  
For that a shadow lowered on the fields,

Here with the shepherds and the silly sheep.

Some life of men unblest

He knew, which made him droop, and filled his  
head.

He went ; his piping took a troubled sound

Of storms that rage outside our happy ground ;

He could not wait their passing, he is dead !

So, some tempestuous morn in early June,

When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er,

Before the roses and the longest day—

When garden-walks, and all the grassy floor,

With blossoms, red and white, of fallen May,

And chestnut-flowers are strewn—

So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,

From the wet field, through the vext garden-  
trees,

Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze :

*The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I.*

Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go ?

Soon will the high Midsummer pomps come on,

Soon will the musk carnations break and  
swell,

Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,

Sweet-William with its homely cottage-smell,

And stocks in fragrant blow ;

Roses that down the alleys shine afar,

And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,

And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,

And the full moon, and the white evening-star.

He hearkens not! light comer, he is flown!

What matters it? next year he will return,

And we shall have him in the sweet spring-  
days,

With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling fern,

And blue-bells trembling by the forest-ways,

And scent of hay new-mown.

But Thyrsis never more we swains shall see!

See him come back, and cut a smoother reed,

And blow a strain the world at last shall heed—

For Time, not Corydon, hath conquered thee.

Alack, for Corydon no rival now!—

But when Sicilian shepherds lost a mate,

Some good survivor with his flute would go,

Piping a ditty sad for Bion's fate,

And cross the unpermitted ferry's flow,

And relax Pluto's brow,

And make leap up with joy the beauteous head

Of Proserpine, among whose crownèd hair

Are flowers, first opened on Sicilian air,

And flute his friend, like Orpheus, from the dead.

O easy access to the hearer's grace

When Dorian shepherds sang to Proserpine!

For she herself had trod Sicilian fields,

She knew the Dorian water's gush divine,

She knew each lily white which Enna yields,

Each rose with blushing face;

She loved the Dorian pipe, the Dorian strain.

But ah, of our poor Thames she never heard!

Her foot the Cumner cowslips never stirred!

And we should tease her with our plaint in vain.

Well! wind-dispersed and vain the words will be,  
Yet, Thyrsis, let me give my grief its hour  
In the old haunt, and find our tree-topped hill!  
Who, if not I, for questing here hath power?  
I know the wood which hides the daffodil,  
I know the Fyfield tree,  
I know what white, what purple fritillaries  
The grassy harvest of the river-fields,  
Above by Ensham, down by Sandford, yields,  
And what sedged brooks are Thames's tributaries;  
I know these slopes; who knows them if not I?—  
But many a dingle on the loved hill-side,  
With thorns once studded, old, white-blos-  
somed trees,  
Where thick the cowslips grew, and, far desried,  
High towered the spikes of purple orchises,  
Hath since our day put by  
The coronals of that forgotten time.  
Down each green bank hath gone the plough-  
boy's team,  
And only in the hidden brookside gleam  
Primroses, orphans of the flowery prime.  
Where is the girl, who, by the boatman's door,  
Above the locks, above the boating throng,  
Unmoored our skiff, when, through the  
Wytham flats,  
Red loosestrife and blond meadow-sweet among,  
And darting swallows, and light water-gnats,  
We tracked the shy Thames shore?  
Where are the mowers, who, as the tiny swell  
Of our boat passing heaved the river-grass,  
Stood with suspended scythe to see us pass?—  
They all are gone, and thou art gone as well.

Yes, thou art gone! and round me too the night  
In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade.

I see her veil draw soft across the day,  
I feel her slowly chilling breath invade  
The cheek grown thin, the brown hair sprent  
with grey;

I feel her finger light  
Laid pausefully upon life's headlong train;  
The foot less prompt to meet the morning dew,  
The heart less bounding at emotion new,  
And hope, once crushed, less quick to spring again.

And long the way appears, which seemed so short  
To the unpractised eye of sanguine youth;  
And high the mountain-tops, in cloudy air,  
The mountain-tops where is the throne of Truth,  
Tops in life's morning-sun so bright and bare!  
Unbreachable the fort

Of the long-battered world uplifts its wall.  
And strange and vain the earthly turmoil  
grows,

And near and real the charm of thy repose,  
And night as welcome as a friend would fall.

But hush! the upland hath a sudden loss  
Of quiet;—Look! adown the dusk hillside,  
A troop of Oxford hunters going home,  
As in old days, jovial and talking, ride!  
From hunting with the Berkshire hounds they  
come—

Quick, let me fly, and cross  
Into yon further field!—'Tis done; and see,  
Back'd by the sunset, which doth glorify  
The orange and pale violet evening-sky,  
Bare on its lonely ridge, the Tree! the Tree!



I take the omen! Eve lets down her veil,  
The white fog creeps from bush to bush about,  
The west unflushes, the high stars grow bright,  
And in the scattered farms the lights come out.  
I cannot reach the Signal-Tree to-night,  
Yet, happy omen, hail!  
Hear it from thy broad lucent Arno vale  
(For there thine earth-forgetting eyelids keep  
The morningless and unawakening sleep  
Under the flowery oleanders pale),

Hear it, O Thyrsis, still our Tree is there!—  
Ah, vain! These English fields, this upland dim,  
These brambles pale with mist engarlanded,  
That lone, sky-pointing tree, are not for him.  
To a boon southern country he is fled,  
And now in happier air,  
Wandering with the great Mother's train divine  
(And purer or more subtle soul than thee,  
I trow, the mighty Mother doth not see!)  
Within a folding of the Apennine,

Thou hearest the immortal strains of old.  
Putting his sickle to the perilous grain  
In the hot cornfield of the Phrygian king,  
For thee the Lityerses song again  
Young Daphnis with his silver voice doth sing;  
Sings his Sicilian fold,  
His sheep, his hapless love, his blinded eyes;  
And how a call celestial round him rang,  
And heavenward from the fountain-brink he  
sprang,  
And all the marvel of the golden skies.



There thou art gone, and me thou leavest here  
Sole in these fields; yet will I not despair;  
Despair I will not, while I yet descry  
'Neath the soft canopy of English air  
That lonely Tree against the western sky.  
Still, still these slopes, 'tis clear,  
Our Gipsy-Scholar haunts, outliving thee!  
Fields where soft sheep from cages pull the  
hay,  
Woods with anemonies in flower till May,  
Know him a wanderer still; then why not me?

A fugitive and gracious light he seeks,  
Shy to illumine; and I seek it too.  
This does not come with houses or with gold,  
With place, with honour, and a flattering crew;  
'Tis not in the world's market bought and sold.  
But the smooth-slipping weeks  
Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired;  
Out of the heed of mortals he is gone,  
He wends unfollowed, he must house alone;  
Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspired.

Thou too, O Thyrsis, on like quest wert bound,  
Thou wanderedst with me for a little hour;  
Men gave thee nothing, but this happy quest,  
If men esteemed thee feeble, gave thee power,  
If men procured thee trouble, gave thee rest.  
And this rude Cumner ground,  
Its fir-topped Hurst, its farms, its quiet fields,  
Here cam'st thou in thy jocund youthful time,  
Here was thine height of strength, thy golden  
prime;  
And still the haunt beloved a virtue yields.

What though the music of thy rustic flute  
Kept not for long its happy, country tone,  
Lost it too soon, and learnt a stormy note  
Of men contention-tost, of men who groan,  
Which tasked thy pipe too sore, and tired thy  
throat—

It failed, and thou wast mute;  
Yet hadst thou alway visions of our light,  
And long with men of care thou couldst not  
stay,  
And soon thy foot resumed its wandering way,  
Left human haunt, and on alone till night.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here!  
'Mid city-noise, not, as with thee of yore,  
Thyrsis, in reach of sheep-bells is my home!  
Then through the great town's harsh, heart-  
wearying roar,  
Let in thy voice a whisper often come,  
To chase fatigue and fear:  
*Why faintest thou! I wandered till I died.*  
*Roam on! the light we sought is shining still.*  
*Dost thou ask proof? Our Tree yet crowns the hill,*  
*Our Scholar travels yet the loved hillside.*

#### RUGBY CHAPEL

COLDLY, sadly descends  
The autumn evening. The Field  
Strewn with its dank yellow drifts  
Of withered leaves, and the elms,  
Fade into dimness apace,  
Silent;—hardly a shout  
From a few boys late at their play!

The lights come out in the street,  
In the school-room windows; but cold,  
Solemn, unlighted, austere,  
Through the gathering darkness, arise  
The Chapel walls, in whose bound  
Thou, my father! art laid.

There thou dost lie, in the gloom  
Of the autumn evening. But ah!  
That word, *gloom*, to my mind  
Brings thee back in the light  
Of thy radiant vigour again!  
In the gloom of November we passed  
Days not of gloom at thy side;  
Seasons impaired not the ray  
Of thine even cheerfulness clear.  
Such thou wast; and I stand  
In the autumn evening, and think  
Of bygone autumns with thee.

Fifteen years have gone round  
Since thou arodest to tread,  
In the summer morning, the road  
Of death, at a call unforeseen,  
Sudden. For fifteen years,  
We who till then in thy shade  
Rested as under the boughs  
Of a mighty oak, have endured  
Sunshine and rain as we might,  
Bare, unshaded, alone,  
Lacking the shelter of thee.

O strong soul, by what shore  
Tarriest thou now? For that force,  
Surely, has not been left vain!

Somewhere, surely, afar,  
In the sounding labour-house vast  
Of being, is practised that strength,  
Zealous, beneficent, firm!

Yes, in some far-shining sphere,  
Conscious or not of the past,  
Still thou performest the word  
Of the Spirit in whom thou dost live,  
Prompt, unwearied, as here!  
Still thou upraisest with zeal  
The humble good from the ground,  
Sternly represses the bad.  
Still, like a trumpet, dost rouse  
Those who with half-open eyes  
Tread the border-land dim  
'Twixt vice and virtue; reviv'st,  
Succourest;—this was thy work,  
This was thy life upon earth.

What is the course of the life  
Of mortal men on the earth?—  
Most men eddy about  
Here and there—eat and drink,  
Chatter and love and hate,  
Gather and squander, are raised  
Aloft, are hurled in the dust,  
Striving blindly, achieving  
Nothing, and then they die—  
Perish; and no one asks  
Who or what they have been,  
More than he asks what waves  
In the moonlit solitudes mild  
Of the midmost Ocean, have swelled,  
Foamed for a moment, and gone.

And there are some, whom a thirst  
Ardent, unquenchable, fires,  
Not with the crowd to be spent,  
Not without aim to go round  
In an eddy of purposeless dust,  
Effort unmeaning and vain.  
Ah yes, some of us strive  
Not without action to die  
Fruitless, but something to snatch  
From dull oblivion, nor all  
Glut the devouring grave!  
We, we have chosen our path—  
Path to a clear-purposed goal,  
Path of advance! but it leads  
A long, steep journey, through sunk  
Gorges, o'er mountains in snow!  
Cheerful with friends, we set forth;  
Then on the height, comes the storm!  
Thunder crashes from rock  
To rock, the cataracts reply;  
Lightnings dazzle our eyes;  
Roaring torrents have breached  
The track, the stream-bed descends  
In the place where the wayfarer once  
Planted his footstep—the spray  
Boils o'er its borders; aloft,  
The unseen snow-beds dislodge  
Their hanging ruin;— alas,  
Havoc is made in our train!  
Friends who set forth at our side  
Falter, are lost in the storm!  
We, we only, are left!  
With frowning foreheads, with lips  
Sternly compressed, we strain on,

On—and at nightfall, at last,  
Come to the end of our way,  
To the lonely inn 'mid the rocks;  
Where the gaunt and taciturn host  
Stands on the threshold, the wind  
Shaking his thin white hairs—  
Holds his lantern to scan  
Our storm-beat figures, and asks:  
Whom in our party we bring?  
Whom we have left in the snow?

Sadly we answer: We bring  
Only ourselves; we lost  
Sight of the rest in the storm.  
Hardly ourselves we fought through,  
Stripp'd, without friends, as we are.  
Friends, companions, and train  
The avalanche swept from our side.

But thou would'st not *alone*  
Be saved, my father! *alone*  
Conquer and come to thy goal,  
Leaving the rest in the wild.  
We were weary, and we  
Fearful, and we, in our march,  
Fain to drop down and to die.  
Still thou turnedst, and still  
Beckonedst the trembler, and still  
Gavest the weary thy hand!  
If, in the paths of the world.  
Stones might have wounded thy feet,  
Toil or dejection have tried  
Thy spirit, of that we saw  
Nothing! to us thou wert still  
Cheerful, and helpful, and firm.

Therefore to thee it was given  
Many to save with thyself;  
And, at the end of thy day,  
O faithful shepherd! to come,  
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.

And through thee I believe  
In the noble and great who are gone;  
Pure souls honoured and blest  
By former ages, who else—  
Such, so soulless, so poor,  
Is the race of men whom I see—  
Seemed but a dream of the heart,  
Seemed but a cry of desire.  
Yes! I believe that there lived  
Others like thee in the past,  
Not like the men of the crowd  
Who all round me to-day  
Bluster or cringe, and make life  
Hideous, and arid, and vile;  
But souls tempered with fire,  
Fervent, heroic, and good,  
Helpers and friends of mankind.

Servants of God!—or sons  
Shall I not call you? because  
Not as servants ye knew  
Your Father's innermost mind,  
His, who unwillingly sees  
One of his little ones lost—  
Yours is the praise, if mankind  
Hath not as yet in its march  
Fainted, and fallen, and died!

See! in the rocks of the world  
Marches the host of mankind,  
A feeble, wavering line.  
Where are they tending?—A God  
Marshalled them, gave them their goal.—  
Ah, but the way is so long!  
Years they have been in the wild!  
Sore thirst plagues them; the rocks,  
Rising all round, overawe.  
Factions divide them; their host  
Threatens to break, to dissolve.  
Ah, keep, keep them combined!  
Else, of the myriads who fill  
That army, not one shall arrive!  
Sole they shall stray; in the rocks  
Labour for ever in vain,  
Die one by one in the waste.

Then, in such hour of need  
Of your fainting, dispirited race,  
Ye, like angels, appear,  
Radiant with ardour divine.  
Beacons of hope, ye appear!  
Langour is not in your heart,  
Weakness is not in your word,  
Weariness not on your brow.  
Ye alight in our van; at your voice,  
Panic, despair, flee away.  
Ye move through the ranks, recall  
The stragglers, refresh the outworn,  
Praise, re-inspire the brave.  
Order, courage, return.  
Eyes rekindling, and prayers,  
Follow your steps as ye go.



Ye fill up the gaps in our files,  
Strengthen the wavering line,  
Stablish, continue our march,  
On, to the bound of the waste,  
On, to the City of God.

## THE FUTURE

A WANDERER is man from his birth.  
He was born in a ship  
On the breast of the River of Time.  
Brimming with wonder and joy  
He spreads out his arms to the light,  
Rivets his gaze on the banks of the stream.

As what he sees is, so have his thoughts been.  
Whether he wakes  
Where the snowy mountainous pass  
Echoing the screams of the eagles  
Hems in its gorges the bed  
Of the new-born clear-flowing stream:  
Whether he first sees light  
Where the river in gleaming rings  
Sluggishly winds through the plain:  
Whether in sound of the swallowing sea:—  
As is the world on the banks  
So is the mind of the man.

Vainly does each as he glides  
Fable and dream  
Of the lands which the River of Time  
Had left ere he woke on its breast,  
Or shall reach when his eyes have been closed.  
Only the tract where he sails  
He wots of: only the thoughts,  
Rais'd by the objects he passes, are his.

Who can see the green Earth any more  
As she was by the sources of Time?  
Who imagines her fields as they lay  
In the sunshine, unworn by the plough?  
Who thinks as they thought,  
The tribes who then roamed on her breast,  
Her vigorous primitive sons?

What girl  
Now reads in her bosom as clear  
As Rebekah read, when she sate  
At eve by the palm-shaded well?  
Who guards in her breast  
As deep, as pellucid a spring  
Of feeling, as tranquil, as sure?

What Bard,  
At the height of his vision, can deem  
Of God, of the world, of the soul,  
With a plainness as near,  
As flashing as Moses felt,  
When he lay in the night by his flock  
On the starlit Arabian waste?  
Can rise and obey  
The beck of the Spirit like him?

This tract which the River of Time  
Now flows through with us, is the Plain.  
Gone is the calm of its earlier shore.  
Bordered by cities and hoarse  
With a thousand cries is its stream.  
And we on its breast, our minds  
Are confused as the cries which we hear,  
Changing and shot as the sights which we see.

And we say that repose has fled  
For ever the course of the River of Time.  
That cities will crowd to its edge  
In a blacker incessanter line;  
That the din will be more on its banks,  
Denser the trade on its stream,  
Flatter the plain where it flows,  
Fiercer the sun overhead.

That never will those on its breast  
See an ennobling sight,  
Drink of the feeling of quiet again.

But what was before us we know not,  
And we know not what shall succeed.

Haply, the River of Time,  
As it grows, as the towns on its marge  
Fling their wavering lights  
On a wider statelier stream—  
May acquire, if not the calm  
Of its early mountainous shore,  
Yet a solemn peace of its own.

And the width of the waters, the hush  
Of the grey expanse where he floats,  
Freshening its current and spotted with foam  
As it draws to the Ocean, may strike  
Peace to the soul of the man on its breast:  
As the pale waste widens around him—  
As the banks fade dimmer away—  
As the stars come out, and the night-wind  
Brings up the stream  
Murmurs and scents of the infinite Sea.

## WILLIAM (JOHNSON) CORY

1823-1892

## AMATURUS

SOMEWHERE beneath the sun,  
These quivering heart-strings prove it,  
Somewhere there must be one  
Made for this soul, to move it;  
Some one that hides her sweetness  
From neighbours whom she slights,  
Nor can attain completeness,  
Nor give her heart its rights;  
Some one whom I could court  
With no great change of manner,  
Still holding reason's fort,  
Though waving fancy's banner;  
A lady, not so queenly  
As to disdain my hand,  
Yet born to smile serenely  
Like those that rule the land;  
Noble, but not too proud;  
With soft hair simply folded,  
And bright face crescent-browed,  
And throat by Muses moulded;  
And eyelids lightly falling  
On little glistening seas,  
Deep-calm, when gales are brawling,  
Though stirred by every breeze:  
Swift voice, like flight of dove  
Through minster arches floating,  
With sudden turns, when love  
Gets overnear to doting;  
Keen lips, that shape soft sayings  
Like crystals of the snow,

With pretty half-betrayings  
Of things one may not know ;  
Fair hand, whose touches thrill,  
Like golden rod of wonder,  
Which Hermes wields at will  
Spirit and flesh to sunder ;  
Light foot, to press the stirrup  
In fearlessness and glee,  
Or dance, till finches chirrup,  
And stars sink to the sea.

Forth, Love, and find this maid,  
Wherever she be hidden :  
Speak, Love, be not afraid,  
But plead as thou art bidden ;  
And say, that he who taught thee  
His yearning want and pain,  
Too dearly, dearly bought thee  
To part with thee in vain.

#### PARTING

As when a traveller, forced to journey back,  
Takes coin by coin, and gravely counts them o'er,  
Grudging each payment, fearing lest he lack,  
Before he can regain the friendly shore ;  
So reckoned I your sojourn, day by day,  
So grudged I every week that dropt away.

And as a prisoner, doomed and bound, upstarts  
From shattered dreams of wedlock and repose,  
At sudden rumblings of the market-carts,  
Which bring to town the strawberry and the rose,  
And wakes to meet sure death ; so shuddered I,  
To hear you meditate your gay Good-bye.

But why not gay? For, if there's aught you lose,  
It is but drawing off a wrinkled glove  
To turn the keys of treasuries, free to choose  
Throughout the hundred-chambered house of love,  
This pathos draws from you, though true and kind,  
Only bland pity for the left-behind.

We part; you comfort one bereaved, unmanned;  
You calmly chide the silence and the grief;  
You touch me once with light and courteous hand,  
And with a sense of something like relief  
You turn away from what may seem to be  
Too hard a trial of your charity.

So closes in the life of life; so ends  
The soaring of the spirit. What remains?  
To take whate'er the Muse's mother lends,  
One sweet sad thought in many soft refrains,  
And half-reveal in Coan gauze of rhyme  
A cherished image of your joyous prime.

#### HERACLITUS

THEY told me, Heraclitus, they told me you were  
dead;

They brought me bitter news to hear and bitter  
tears to shed.

I wept, as I remembered, how often you and I  
Had tired the sun with talking and sent him down  
the sky.

And now that thou art lying, my dear old Carian  
guest,

A handful of grey ashes, long long ago at rest,  
Still are thy pleasant voices, thy nightingales, awake,  
For Death, he taketh all away, but them he cannot  
take.

## COVENTRY PATMORE

1823-1896

FROM 'THE ANGEL IN THE HOUSE'

## (1) THE LOVER

HE meets, by heavenly chance express  
The destined maid ; some hidden hand  
Unveils to him that loveliness  
Which others cannot understand.  
His merits in her presence grow,  
To match the promise in her eyes,  
And round her happy footsteps blow  
The authentic airs of Paradise.  
For joy of her he cannot sleep ;  
Her beauty haunts him all the night ;  
It melts his heart, it makes him weep  
For wonder, worship, and delight.  
O, paradox of love, he longs,  
Most humble when he most aspires,  
To suffer scorn and cruel wrongs  
From her he honours and desires :  
Her graces make him rich, and ask  
No guerdon ; this imperial style  
Affronts him ; he disdains to bask,  
The pensioner of her priceless smile.  
He prays for some hard thing to do,  
Some work of fame and labour immense,  
To stretch the languid bulk and thew  
Of love's fresh-born magnipotence.  
No smallest boon were bought too dear,  
Though bartered for his love-sick life ;  
Yet trusts he, with undaunted cheer,  
To vanquish heaven and call her wife.

He notes how queens of sweetness still  
Neglect their crowns, and stoop to mate;  
How, self-consigned with lavish will,  
They ask but love proportionate;  
How swift pursuit by small degrees,  
Love's tactic, works like miracle;  
How valour, clothed in courtesies,  
Brings down the haughtiest citadel;  
And therefore, though he merits not  
To kiss the braid upon her skirt,  
His hope, discouraged ne'er a jot,  
Out-soars all possible desert;  
Resistance only makes him gay:  
The fiercer fight the fairer she;  
In vain her distance says him nay;  
Hope, desperate grown, feigns certainty.

(2) THE MARRIED LOVER

WHY, having won her, do I woo?  
Because her spirit's vestal grace  
Provokes me always to pursue,  
But, spirit-like, eludes embrace;  
Because her womanhood is such  
That, as on court-days subjects kiss  
The Queen's hand, yet so near a touch  
Affirms no mean familiarity;  
Nay, rather marks more fair the height  
Which can with safety so neglect  
To dread, as lower ladies might,  
That grace could meet with disrespect,  
Thus she with happy favour feeds  
Allegiance from a love so high  
That thence no false conceit proceeds  
Of difference bridged, or state put by;



Because, although in act and word  
As lowly as a wife can be,  
Her manners, when they call me lord,  
Remind me 'tis by courtesy;  
Not with her least consent of will,  
Which would my proud affection hurt,  
But by the noble style that still  
Imputes an unattained desert;  
Because her gay and lofty brows,  
When all is won which hope can ask,  
Reflect a light of hopeless snows  
That bright in virgin ether bask;  
Because, though free of the outer court  
I am, this Temple keeps its shrine  
Sacred to Heaven; because, in short,  
She's not and never can be mine.

- (3) 'Twas when the spousal time of May  
'Twas when the spousal time of May  
Hangs all the hedge with bridal wreaths,  
And air's so sweet the bosom gay  
Gives thanks for every breath it breathes,  
When like to like is gladly moved,  
And each thing joins in Spring's refrain,  
'Let those love now who never loved;  
Let those who have loved love again;'  
That I, in whom the sweet time wrought,  
Lay stretched within a lonely glade,  
Abandoned to delicious thought  
Beneath the softly twinkling shade.  
The leaves, all stirring, mimicked well  
A neighbouring rush of rivers cold,  
And, as the sun or shadow fell,  
So these were green and those were gold;

In dim recesses hyacinths drooped,  
And breadths of primrose lit the air,  
Which, wandering through the woodland, stooped  
And gathered perfumes here and there;  
Upon the spray the squirrel swung,  
And careless songsters, six or seven,  
Sang lofty songs the leaves among,  
Fit for their only listener, Heaven.

## ST. VALENTINE'S DAY

WELL dost thou, Love, thy solemn Feast to hold  
In vestal February;  
Not rather choosing out some rosy day  
From the rich coronet of the coming May,  
When all things meet to marry!

O, quick, prævernal Power  
That signall'st punctual through the sleepy mould  
The Snowdrop's time to flower,  
Fair as the rash oath of virginity  
Which is first-love's first cry;  
O, Baby Spring,  
That flutter'st sudden 'neath the breast of Earth  
A month before the birth;  
Whence is the peaceful poignancy,  
The joy contrite,  
Sadder than sorrow, sweeter than delight,  
That burthens now the breath of everything,  
Though each one sighs as if to each alone  
The cherish'd pang were known?  
At dusk of dawn, on his dark spray apart,  
With it the Blackbird breaks the young Day's heart;  
In evening's hush  
About it talks the heavenly-minded Thrush;

The hill with like remorse  
Smiles to the Sun's smile in his westering course ;  
The fisher's drooping skiff  
In yonder sheltering bay ;  
The choughs that call about the shining cliff ;  
The children, noisy in the setting ray ;  
Own the sweet season, each thing as it may ;  
Thoughts of strange kindness and forgotten peace  
In me increase ;  
And tears arise  
Within my happy, happy Mistress' eyes,  
And, lo, her lips, averted from my kiss,  
Ask from Love's bounty, ah, much more than bliss !  
Is't the sequestered and exceeding sweet  
Of dear Desire electing his defeat ?  
Is't the waked Earth now to yon purpling cope  
Uttering first-love's first cry,  
Vainly renouncing, with a Seraph's sigh,  
Love's natural hope ?  
Fair-meaning Earth, foredoomed to perjury !  
Behold, all-amorous May,  
With roses heap'd upon her laughing brows,  
Avoids thee of thy vows !  
Were it for thee, with her warm bosom near,  
To abide the sharpness of the Seraph's sphere ?  
Forget thy foolish words ;  
Go to her summons gay,  
Thy heart with dead, winged Innocencies filled,  
Even as a nest with birds  
After the old ones by the hawk are killed.  
Well dost thou, Love, to celebrate,  
The noon of thy soft ecstasy  
Or e'er it be too late,  
Or e'er the Snowdrop die !

## SYDNEY DOBELL

1824-1874

## KEITH OF RAVELSTON

THE murmur of the mourning ghost  
That keeps the shadowy kine,  
'Oh, Keith of Ravelston,  
The sorrows of thy line!'

Ravelston, Ravelston,  
The merry path that leads  
Down the golden morning hill,  
And thro' the silver meads;

Ravelston, Ravelston,  
The stile beneath the tree,  
The maid that kept her mother's kine,  
The song that sang she!

She sang her song, she kept her kine,  
She sat beneath the thorn,  
When Andrew Keith of Ravelston  
Rode thro' the Monday morn.

His henchmen sing, his hawk-bells ring,  
His belted jewels shine!  
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,  
The sorrows of thy line!

Year after year, where Andrew came,  
Comes evening down the glade,  
And still there sits a moonshine ghost  
Where sat the sunshine maid.

Her misty hair is faint and fair,  
She keeps the shadowy kine;  
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,  
The sorrows of thy line!

I lay my hand upon the stile,  
The stile is lone and cold;  
The burnie that goes babbling by  
Says naught that can be told.

Yet, stranger! here, from year to year,  
She keeps her shadowy kine;  
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,  
The sorrows of thy line!

Step out three steps, where Andrew stood—  
Why blanch thy cheeks for fear?  
The ancient stile is not alone,  
'Tis not the burn I hear!

She makes her immemorial moan,  
She keeps her shadowy kine;  
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,  
The sorrows of thy line!

burnie] burn, brook.

### THIS DEAR ENGLISH LAND

(*From* BALDER)

THIS dear English land!  
This happy England, loud with brooks and birds,  
Shining with harvests, cool with dewy trees  
And bloomed from hill to dell; but whose best  
flowers  
Are daughters, and Ophelia still more fair  
Than any rose she weaves; whose noblest floods  
The pulsing torrent of a nation's heart;  
Whose forests stronger than her native oaks

Are living men ; and whose unfathomed lakes  
For ever calm the unforgotten dead  
In quiet graveyards willowed seemly round,  
O'er which To-day bends sad, and sees his face.  
Whose rocks are rights, consolidate of old  
Thro' unremembered years, around whose base  
The ever-surging peoples roll and roar  
Perpetual, as around her cliffs the seas  
That only wash them whiter ; and whose mountains,  
Souls that from this mere footing of the earth  
Lift their great virtues thro' all clouds of Fate  
Up to the very heavens, and make them rise  
To keep the gods above us !

## WILLIAM ALLINGHAM

1824-1889

## ROBIN REDBREAST

GOOD-BYE, good-bye to Summer !  
For Summer's nearly done ;  
The garden smiling faintly,  
Cool breezes in the sun ;  
Our thrushes now are silent,  
Our swallows flown away,—  
But Robin's here, in coat of brown,  
With ruddy breast-knot gay.  
Robin, Robin Redbreast,  
O Robin dear !  
Robin sings so sweetly,  
In the falling of the year.

Bright yellow, red, and orange,  
The leaves come down in hosts ;

The trees are Indian Princes,  
But soon they'll turn to ghosts;  
The leathery pears and apples  
Hang russet on the bough;  
It's Autumn, Autumn, Autumn late,  
'Twill soon be Winter now.  
Robin, Robin Redbreast,  
O Robin dear!  
And what will this poor Robin do?  
For pinching days are near.

The fireside for the cricket,  
The wheat-stack for the mouse,  
When trembling night-winds whistle,  
And moan all round the house.  
The frosty ways like iron,  
The branches plumed with snow,—  
Alas, in Winter dead and dark  
Where can poor Robin go?  
Robin, Robin Redbreast,  
O Robin dear!  
And a crumb of bread for Robin,  
His little heart to cheer!

#### THE FAIRY SHOEMAKER

LITTLE Cowboy, what have you heard,  
Up on the lonely rath's green mound?  
Only the plaintive yellow bird  
Sighing in sultry fields around,  
Chary, chary, chary, chee-ee!  
Only the grasshopper and the bee?  
'Tip-tap, rip-rap,  
Tick-a-tack-too!

Scarlet leather, sewn together,  
This will make a shoe.  
Left, right, pull it tight;  
Summer days are warm;  
Underground in winter,  
Laughing at the storm!’  
Lay your ear close to the hill.  
Do you not catch the tiny clamour—  
Busy click of an elfin hammer,  
Voice of the Lupracaun singing shrill  
As he merrily plies his trade?  
He’s a span  
And a quarter in height.  
Get him in sight, hold him tight,  
And you’re a made  
Man!

You watch your cattle in the summer day,  
Sup on potatoes, sleep in the hay;  
How would you like to roll in your carriage,  
Look for a duchess’s daughter in marriage?  
Seize the Shoemaker—then you may!  
‘Big boots a-hunting,  
Sandals in the hall,  
White for a wedding-feast,  
Pink for a ball.  
This way, that way,  
So we make a shoe;  
Getting rich every stitch,  
Tick-tack-too!’  
Nine-and-ninety treasure-crocks  
This keen miser-fairy hath,  
Hid in mountains, woods, and rocks,  
Ruin and round-tow’r, cave and rath,



And where the cormorants build ;  
From times of old  
Guarded by him ;  
Each of them filled  
Full to the brim  
With gold!

I caught him at work one day, myself,  
In the castle-ditch where foxglove grows,—  
A wrinkled, wizened, and bearded elf,  
Spectacles stuck on his pointed nose,  
Silver buckles to his hose,  
Leather apron—shoe in his lap—  
‘Rip-rap, tip-tap,  
Tick-tack-too!  
(A grig skipped upon my cap,  
Away the moth flew)  
Buskins for a fairy prince,  
Brogues for his son,—  
Pay me well, pay me well,  
When the job is done!’  
The rogue was mine, beyond a doubt.  
I stared at him ; he stared at me ;  
‘Servant, Sir!’ ‘Humph!’ says he,  
And pulled a snuff-box out.  
He took a long pinch, looked better pleased,  
The queer little Lupracaun ;  
Offered the box with a whimsical grace,—  
Pouf! he flung the dust in my face,  
And while I sneezed,  
Was gone!

## A DREAM

I HEARD the dogs howl in the moonlight night;  
I went to the window to see the sight;  
All the dead that ever I knew  
Going one by one and two by two.

On they passed, and on they passed;  
Townsfellows all from first to last;  
Born in the moonlight of the lane,  
And quenched in the heavy shadow again.

Schoolmates, marching as when we played  
At soldiers once—but now more staid;  
Those were the strangest sight to me  
Who were drowned, I knew, in the awful sea.

Straight and handsome folk; bent and weak too;  
And some that I loved, and gasped to speak to;  
Some but a day in their churchyard bed;  
And some that I had not known were dead.

A long, long crowd—where each seemed lonely.  
Yet of them all there was one, one only,  
That raised a head, or looked my way:  
And she seemed to linger, but might not stay.

How long since I saw that fair pale face!  
Ah, mother dear, might I only place  
My head on thy breast, a moment to rest,  
While thy hand on thy tearful cheek were prest!

On, on, a moving bridge they made  
Across the moon-stream, from shade to shade  
Young and old, women and men;  
Many long-forgot, but remembered then.

And first there came a bitter laughter;  
A sound of tears the moment after;  
And then a music so lofty and gay,  
That every morning, day by day,  
I strive to recall it if I may.

## FOUR DUCKS ON A POND

FOUR ducks on a pond,  
A grass-bank beyond,  
A blue sky of spring,  
White clouds on the wing;  
What a little thing  
To remember for years—  
To remember with tears!

## DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

1828-1882

## THE BLESSÈD DAMOZEL

THE blessèd damozel lean'd out  
From the gold bar of Heaven;  
Her eyes were deeper than the depth  
Of waters stilled at even;  
She had three lilies in her hand,  
And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,  
No wrought flowers did adorn,  
But a white rose of Mary's gift  
On the neck meetly worn;  
And her hair, lying down her back.  
Was yellow like ripe corn.

Herseemed she scarce had been a day  
One of God's choristers ;  
The wonder was not yet quite gone  
From that still look of hers ;  
Albeit, to them she left, her day  
Had counted as ten years.

(To one, it is ten years of years.  
... Yet now, and in this place,  
Surely she leaned o'er me,—her hair  
Fell all about my face. . . .  
Nothing: the Autumn-fall of leaves.  
The whole year sets apace.)

It was the rampart of God's house  
That she was standing on,—  
By God built over the sheer depth  
In which is Space begun ;  
So high, that looking downward thence  
She scarce could see the sun.

It lies in Heaven, across the flood  
Of ether, as a bridge.  
Beneath, the tides of day and night  
With flame and darkness ridge  
The void, as low as where this earth  
Spins like a fretful midge.

Heard hardly, some\*of her new friends  
Amid their loving games,  
Spake evermore, among themselves,  
Their virginal chaste names ;  
And the souls, mounting up to God,  
Went by her like thin flames.

And still she bowed herself and stooped  
Out of the circling charm;  
Until her bosom must have made  
The bar she leaned on warm,  
And the lilies lay as if asleep  
Along her bended arm.

From the fixed place of Heaven she saw  
Time like a pulse shake fierce  
Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove  
In that steep gulf, to pierce  
Its path; and then she spoke as when  
The stars sang in their spheres.

The sun was gone now; the curled moon  
Was like a little feather  
Fluttering far down the gulf; and now  
She spoke through the still weather.  
Her voice was like the voice the stars  
Had when they sang together.

(Ah sweet! Even now, in that bird's song,  
Strove not her accents there,  
Fain to be hearkened? When those bells  
Possessed the mid-day air,  
Strove not her steps to reach my side  
Down all the echoing stair?)

'I wish that he were come to me,  
For he will come,' she said.  
'Have I not prayed in Heaven?—on earth,  
Lord, Lord, has he not prayed?  
Are not two prayers a perfect strength?  
And shall I feel afraid?

‘When round his head the aureole clings,  
And he is clothed in white,  
I’ll take his hand, and go with him  
To the deep wells of light;  
And we will step down as to a stream,  
And bathe there in God’s sight.

‘We two will stand beside that shrine,  
Occult, withheld, untrod,  
Whose lamps are stirred continually  
With prayer sent up to God;  
And see our old prayers, granted, melt  
Each like a little cloud.

‘We two will lie i’ the shadow of  
That living mystic tree  
Within whose secret growth the Dove  
Sometimes is felt to be,  
While every leaf that His plumes touch  
Saith His name audibly.

‘And I myself will teach to him,  
I myself, lying so,  
The songs I sing here; which his voice  
Shall pause in, hushed and slow,  
Finding some knowledge at each pause,  
And some new thing to know.’

(Alas! We two, we two, thou say’st!  
Yea, one wast thou with me  
That once of old. But shall God lift  
To endless unity  
The soul whose likeness with thy soul  
Was but its love for thee?)

‘We two,’ she said, ‘will seek the groves  
Where the lady Mary is,  
With her five handmaidens, whose names  
Are five sweet symphonies,—  
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,  
Margaret and Rosalys.

‘Circlewise sit they, with bound locks  
And foreheads garlanded ;  
Into the fine cloth, white like flame,  
Weaving the golden thread,  
To fashion the birth-robcs for them  
Who are just born, being dead.

‘He shall fear, haply, and be dumb :  
Then I will lay my cheek  
To his, and tell about our love,  
Not once abash’d or weak :  
And the dear Mother will approve  
My pride, and let me speak.

‘Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,  
To Him round whom all souls  
Kneel, the clear-ranged unnumbered heads  
Bowed with their aureoles :  
And angels meeting us, shall sing  
To their citherns and citoles.

‘There will I ask of Christ the Lord  
Thus much for him and me :—  
To have more blessing than on earth  
With Love,—only to be  
As then awhile, for ever now  
Together, I and he.’

She gazed, and listened, and then said,  
Less sad of speech than mild,—  
‘All this is when he comes.’ She ceased.  
The light thrilled towards her, filled  
With angels, in strong level flight.  
Her eyes prayed, and she smiled.

(I saw her smile.) But soon their path  
Was vague in distant spheres.  
And then she cast her arms along  
The golden barriers,  
And laid her face between her hands,  
And wept. (I heard her tears.)

### THE PORTRAIT

THIS is her picture as she was:  
It seems a thing to wonder on,  
As though mine image in the glass  
Should tarry when myself am gone.  
I gaze until she seems to stir,—  
Until mine eyes almost aver  
That now, even now, the sweet lips part  
To breathe the words of the sweet heart:—  
And yet the earth is over her.  
Alas! even such the thin-drawn ray  
That makes the prison-depths more rude,—  
The drip of water night and day  
Giving a tongue to solitude.  
Yet this, of all love’s perfect prize,  
Remains; save what in mournful guise  
Takes counsel with my soul alone,—  
Save what is secret and unknown,  
Below the earth, above the skies.



In painting her I shrined her face  
Mid mystic trees, where light falls in  
Hardly at all; a covert place  
Where you might think to find a din  
Of doubtful talk, and a live flame  
Wandering, and many a shape whose name  
Not itself knoweth, and old dew,  
And your own footsteps meeting you,  
And all things going as they came.

A deep dim wood; and there she stands  
As in that wood that day: for so  
Was the still movement of her hands  
And such the pure line's gracious flow.  
And passing fair the type must seem,  
Unknown the presence and the dream.  
'Tis she: though of herself, alas!  
Less than her shadow on the grass  
Or than her image in the stream.

That day we met there, I and she  
One with the other all alone;  
And we were blithe; yet memory  
Saddens those hours, as when the moon  
Looks upon daylight. And with her  
I stooped to drink the spring-water,  
Athirst where other waters sprang;  
And where the echo is, she sang,—  
My soul another echo there.

But when that hour my soul won strength  
For words whose silence wastes and kills,  
Dull raindrops smote us, and at length  
Thundered the heat within the hills.

That eve I spoke those words again  
Beside the pelted window-pane;  
And there she hearkened what I said,  
With under-glances that surveyed  
The empty pastures blind with rain.

Next day the memories of these things,  
Like leaves through which a bird has flown,  
Still vibrated with Love's warm wings;  
Till I must make them all my own  
And paint this picture. So, 'twixt ease  
Of talk and sweet long silences,  
She stood among the plants in bloom  
At windows of a summer room,  
To feign the shadow of the trees.

And as I wrought, while all above  
And all around was fragrant air,  
In the sick burthen of my love  
It seemed each sun-thrilled blossom there  
Beat like a heart among the leaves.  
O heart that never beats nor heaves,  
In that one darkness lying still,  
What now to thee my love's great will  
Or the fine web the sunshine weaves?

For now doth daylight disavow  
Those days,—nought left to see or hear.  
Only in solemn whispers now  
At night time these things reach mine ear,  
When the leaf-shadows at a breath  
Shrink in the road, and all the heath,  
Forest and water, far and wide,  
In limpid starlight glorified,  
Lie like the mystery of death.

Last night at last I could have slept,  
And yet delayed my sleep till dawn,  
Still wandering. Then it was I wept:  
For unawares I came upon  
Those glades where once she walked with me:  
And as I stood there suddenly,  
All wan with traversing the night,  
Upon the desolate verge of light  
Yearned loud the iron-bosomed sea.

Even so, where Heaven holds breath and hears  
The beating heart of Love's own breast,—  
Where round the secret of all spheres  
All angels lay their wings to rest,—  
How shall my soul stand rapt and awed,  
When, by the new birth borne abroad  
Throughout the music of the suns,  
It enters in her soul at once  
And knows the silence there for God!

Here with her face doth memory sit  
Meanwhile, and wait the day's decline,  
Till other eyes shall look from it,  
Eyes of the spirit's Palestine,  
Even than the old gaze tenderer:  
While hopes and aims long lost with her  
Stand round her image side by side,  
Like tombs of pilgrims that have died  
About the Holy Sepulchre.

## SIBYLLA PALMIFERA

*(For a Picture)*

UNDER the arch of Life, where love and death,  
Terror and mystery, guard her shrine, I saw  
Beauty enthroned: and though her gaze struck awe,  
I drew it in as simply as my breath.  
Hers are the eyes which, over and beneath,  
The sky and sea bend on thee,—which can draw,  
By sea or sky or woman, to one law,  
The allotted bondman of her palm and wreath.  
This is that Lady Beauty, in whose praise  
Thy voice and hand shake still,—long known to  
thee  
By flying hair and fluttering hem,—the beat  
Following her daily of thy heart and feet,  
How passionately and irretrievably,  
In what fond flight, how many ways and days!

## LOVESIGHT

WHEN do I see thee most, beloved one?  
When in the light the spirits of mine eyes  
Before thy face, their altar, solemnize  
The worship of that Love through thee made known?  
Or when in the dusk hours, (we two alone,)  
Close-kissed and eloquent of still replies  
Thy twilight-hidden glimmering visage lies,  
And my soul only sees thy soul its own?  
O love, my love! if I no more should see  
Thyself, nor on the earth the shadow of thee,  
Nor image of thine eyes in any spring,—  
How then should sound upon Life's darkening slope  
The ground-whirl of the perished leaves of Hope,  
The wind of Death's imperishable wing?

## LOVE-SWEETNESS

SWEET dimness of her loosened hair's downfall  
About thy face ; her sweet hands round thy head  
In gracious fostering union garlanded ;  
Her tremulous smiles ; her glances' sweet recall  
Of love ; her murmuring sighs memorial ;  
Her mouth's culled sweetness by thy kisses shed  
On cheeks and neck and eyelids, and so led  
Back to her mouth which answers there for all :—  
What sweeter than these things, except the thing  
In lacking which all these would lose their  
sweet :—  
The confident heart's still fervour ; the swift beat  
And soft subsidence of the spirit's wing,  
Then when it feels, in cloud-girt wayfaring,  
The breath of kindred plumes against its feet ?

## GEORGE MEREDITH

1828–1909

## MARIAN

SHE can be as wise as we,  
And wiser when she wishes ;  
She can knit with cunning wit,  
And dress the homely dishes.  
She can flourish staff or pen,  
And deal a wound that lingers ;  
She can talk the talk of men,  
And touch with thrilling fingers.  
Match her ye across the sea,  
Natures fond and fiery ;  
Ye who zest the turtle's nest  
With the eagle's eyrie.

Soft and loving is her soul,  
Swift and lofty soaring;  
Mixing with its dove-like dole  
Passionate adoring.

Such a she who'll match with me?  
In flying or pursuing,  
Subtle wiles are in her smiles  
To set the world a-wooing.  
She is steadfast as a star,  
And yet the maddest maiden:  
She can wage a gallant war,  
And give the peace of Eden.

#### A BALLAD OF PAST MERIDIAN

LAST night, returning from my twilight walk  
I met the grey mist Death, whose eyeless brow  
Was bent on me, and from his hand of chalk  
He reached me flowers as from a withered bough:  
Oh Death, what bitter nosegays givest thou!

Death said, 'I gather,' and pursued his way.  
Another stood by me, a shape in stone,  
Sword-hacked and iron-stained, with breasts of clay,  
And metal veins, that sometimes fiery shone.  
Oh Life, how naked and how hard when  
known!

Life said, 'As thou hast carved me, such am I.'  
Then memory, like the night-jar on the pine,  
And sightless hope, a woodlark in night sky,  
Joined notes of Death and Life till night's decline.  
Of Death, of Life, those inwound notes are mine.

## TARDY SPRING

Now the North wind ceases,  
The warm South-west awakes ;  
Swift fly the fleeces,  
Thick the blossom-flakes.

Now hill to hill has made the stride,  
And distance waves the without-end :  
Now in the breast a door flings wide ;  
Our farthest smiles, our next is friend.  
And song of England's rush of flowers  
Is this full breeze with mellow stops,  
That spins the lark for shine, for showers ;  
He drinks his hurried flight, and drops.  
The stir in memory seem these things,  
Which out of moistened turf and clay,  
Astrain for light push patient rings,  
Or leap to find the waterway.  
'Tis equal to a wonder done,  
Whatever simple lives renew  
Their tricks beneath the father sun,  
As though they caught a broken clue :  
So hard was earth an eyewink back ;  
But now the common life has come,  
The blotting cloud a dappled pack,  
The grasses one vast underhum.  
A City clothed in snow and soot,  
With lamps for day in ghostly rows,  
Breaks to the scene of hosts afoot,  
The river that reflective flows :  
And there did fog down crypts of street  
Play spectre upon eye and mouth :—  
Their faces are a glass to greet  
This magic of the whirl for South.

A burly joy each creature swells  
With sound of its own hungry quest;  
Earth has to fill her empty wells,  
And speed the service of the nest;  
The phantom of the snow-wreath melt,  
That haunts the farmer's look abroad,  
Who sees what tomb a white night built,  
Where flocks now bleat and sprouts the clod.  
For iron Winter held her firm;  
Across her sky he laid his hand;  
And bird he starved, he stiffen'd worm;  
A sightless heaven, a shaven land.  
Her shivering Spring feigned fast asleep,  
The bitten buds dared not unfold:  
We raced on roads and ice to keep  
Thought of the girl we love from cold.

But now the North wind ceases,  
The warm South-west awakes,  
The heavens are out in fleeces,  
And earth's green banner shakes.

## CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI

1830-1894

### GOBLIN MARKET

MORNING and evening  
Maids heard the goblins cry:  
'Come buy our orchard fruits,  
Come buy, come buy:  
Apples and quinces,  
Lemons and oranges,  
Plump unpecked cherries,  
Melons and raspberries,  
Bloom-down-cheeked peaches,



Swart-headed mulberries,  
Wild free-born cranberries,  
Crab-apples, dewberries,  
Pine-apples, blackberries,  
Apricots, strawberries;—  
All ripe together  
In summer weather,—  
Morns that pass by,  
Fair eves that fly;  
Come buy, come buy:  
Our grapes fresh from the vine,  
Pomegranates full and fine,  
Dates and sharp bullaces,  
Rare pears and greengages,  
Damsons and bilberries,  
Taste them and try:  
Currants and gooseberries,  
Bright-fire-like barberries,  
Figs to fill your mouth,  
Citrons from the South,  
Sweet to tongue and sound to eye;  
Come buy, come buy.'

Evening by evening  
Among the brookside rushes,  
Laura bowed her head to hear,  
Lizzie veiled her blushes:  
Crouching close together  
In the cooling weather,  
With clasping arms and cautioning lips,  
With tingling cheeks and finger tips.  
'Lie close,' Laura said,  
Pricking up her golden head:  
'We must not look at goblin men,

We must not buy their fruits:  
Who knows upon what soil they fed  
Their hungry thirsty roots?'  
'Come buy,' call the goblins  
Hobbling down the glen.  
'Oh,' cried Lizzie, 'Laura, Laura,  
You should not peep at goblin men.'  
Lizzie covered up her eyes,  
Covered close lest they should look;  
Laura reared her glossy head,  
And whispered like the restless brook:  
'Look, Lizzie, look, Lizzie,  
Down the glen tramp little men.  
One hauls a basket,  
One bears a plate,  
One lugs a golden dish  
Of many pounds weight.  
How fair the vine must grow  
Whose grapes are so luscious;  
How warm the wind must blow  
Through those fruit bushes.'  
'No,' said Lizzie; 'No, no, no;  
Their offers should not charm us,  
Their evil gifts would harm us.'  
She thrust a dimpled finger  
In each ear, shut eyes and ran:  
Curious Laura chose to linger  
Wondering at each merchant man.  
One had a cat's face,  
One whisked a tail,  
One tramped at a rat's pace,  
One crawled like a snail,  
One like a wombat prowled obtuse and furry,  
One like a ratel tumbled hurry skurry.

She heard a voice like voice of doves  
Cooing all together:  
They sounded kind and full of loves  
In the pleasant weather.

Laura stretched her gleaming neck  
Like a rush-imbedded swan,  
Like a lily from the beck,  
Like a moonlit poplar branch,  
Like a vessel at the launch  
When its last restraint is gone.

Backwards up the mossy glen  
Turned and trooped the goblin men,  
With their shrill repeated cry,  
'Come buy, come buy.'  
When they reached where Laura was  
They stood stock still upon the moss,  
Leering at each other,  
Brother with queer brother;  
Signalling each other,  
Brother with sly brother.  
One set his basket down,  
One reared his plate;  
One began to weave a crown  
Of tendrils, leaves, and rough nuts brown  
(Men sell not such in any town);  
One heaved the golden weight  
Of dish and fruit to offer her:  
'Come buy, come buy,' was still their cry.  
Laura stared but did not stir,  
Longed but had no money:  
The whisk-tailed merchant bade her taste

In tones as smooth as honey,  
The cat-faced purred,  
The rat-paced spoke a word  
Of welcome, and the snail-paced even was heard;  
One parrot-voiced and jolly  
Cried 'Pretty Goblin' still for 'Pretty Polly';—  
One whistled like a bird.

But sweet-tooth Laura spoke in haste:  
'Good folk, I have no coin;  
To take were to purloin:  
I have no copper in my purse,  
I have no silver either,  
And all my gold is on the furze  
That shakes in windy weather  
Above the rusty heather.'  
'You have much gold upon your head,'  
They answered all together:  
'Buy from us with a golden curl.'  
She clipped a precious golden lock,  
She dropped a tear more rare than pearl,  
Then sucked their fruit globes fair or red:  
Sweeter than honey from the rock,  
Stronger than man-rejoicing wine,  
Clearer than water flowed that juice;  
She never tasted such before,  
How should it cloy with length of use?  
She sucked and sucked and sucked the more  
Fruits which that unknown orchard bore;  
She sucked until her lips were sore;  
Then flung the emptied rinds away  
But gathered up one kernel stone,  
And knew not was it night or day  
As she turned home alone.

Lizzie met her at the gate  
Full of wise upbraidings:  
'Dear, you should not stay so late,  
Twilight is not good for maidens;  
Should not loiter in the glen  
In the haunts of goblin men.  
Do you not remember Jeanie,  
How she met them in the moonlight,  
Took their gifts both choice and many,  
Ate their fruits and wore their flowers  
Plucked from bowers  
Where summer ripens at all hours?  
But ever in the moonlight  
She pined and pined away;  
Sought them by night and day,  
Found them no more but dwindled and grew grey;  
Then fell with the first snow,  
While to this day no grass will grow  
Where she lies low:  
I planted daisies there a year ago  
That never blow.  
You should not loiter so.'  
'Nay, hush,' said Laura:  
'Nay, hush, my sister:  
I ate and ate my fill,  
Yet my mouth waters still;  
To-morrow night I will  
Buy more:' and kissed her:  
'Have done with sorrow;  
I'll bring you plums to-morrow  
Fresh on their mother twigs,  
Cherries worth getting;  
You cannot think what figs  
My teeth have met in,

What melons icy-cold  
 Piled on a dish of gold  
 Too huge for me to hold,  
 What peaches with a velvet nap,  
 Pellucid grapes without one seed:  
 Odorous indeed must be the mead  
 Whereon they grow, and pure the wave they drink  
 With lilies at the brink,  
 And sugar-sweet their sap.'

Golden head by golden head,  
 Like two pigeons in one nest  
 Folded in each other's wings,  
 They lay down in their curtained bed:  
 Like two blossoms on one stem,  
 Like two flakes of new-fall'n snow,  
 Like two wands of ivory  
 Tipped with gold for awful kings.  
 Moon and stars gazed in at them,  
 Wind sang to them lullaby,  
 Lumbering owls forbore to fly,  
 Not a bat flapped to and fro  
 Round their nest:  
 Cheek to cheek and breast to breast  
 Locked together in one nest.

Early in the morning<sup>o</sup>  
 When the first cock crowed his warning,  
 Neat like bees, as sweet and busy,  
 Laura rose with Lizzie:  
 Fetched in honey, milked the cows,  
 Aired and set to rights the house,  
 Kneaded cakes of whitest wheat,  
 Cakes for dainty mouths to eat,

Next churned butter, whipped up cream,  
Fed their poultry, sat and sewed;  
Talked as modest maidens should:  
Lizzie with an open heart,  
Laura in an absent dream,  
One content, one sick in part;  
One warbling for the mere bright day's delight,  
One longing for the night.

At length slow evening came:  
They went with pitchers to the reedy brook;  
Lizzie most placid in her look,  
Laura most like a leaping flame.  
They drew the gurgling water from its deep;  
Lizzie plucked purple and rich golden flags,  
Then turning homewards said: 'The sunset flushes  
Those furthest loftiest crags;  
Come, Laura, not another maiden lags,  
No wilful squirrel wags,  
The beasts and birds are fast asleep.'  
But Laura loitered still among the rushes  
And said the bank was steep.

And said the hour was early still,  
The dew not fall'n, the wind not chill:  
Listening ever, but not catching  
The customary cry,  
'Come buy, come buy,'  
With its iterated jingle  
Of sugar-baited words:  
Not for all her watching  
Once discerning even one goblin  
Racing, whisking, tumbling, hobbling;

Let alone the herds  
That used to tramp along the glen,  
In groups or singles,  
Of brisk fruit-merchant men.

Till Lizzie urged, 'O Laura, come;  
I hear the fruit-call but I dare not look:  
You should not loiter longer at this brook:  
Come with me home.  
The stars rise, the moon bends her arc,  
Each glowworm winks her spark,  
Let us get home before the night grows dark:  
For clouds may gather  
Though this is summer weather,  
Put out the lights and drench us through;  
Then if we lost our way what should we do?'

Laura turned cold as stone  
To find her sister heard that cry alone,  
That goblin cry,  
'Come buy our fruits, come buy.'  
Must she then buy no more such dainty fruit?  
Must she no more such succous pasture find,  
Gone deaf and blind?  
Her tree of life drooped from the root:  
She said not one word in her heart's sore ache;  
But peering thro' the dimness, nought discerning,  
Trudged home, her pitcher dripping all the way;  
So crept to bed, and lay  
Silent till Lizzie slept;  
Then sat up in a passionate yearning,  
And gnashed her teeth for baulked desire, and wept  
As if her heart would break.



Day after day, night after night,  
Laura kept watch in vain  
In sullen silence of exceeding pain.  
She never caught again the goblin cry:  
'Come buy, come buy;'—  
She never spied the goblin men  
Hawking their fruits along the glen:  
But when the noon waxed bright  
Her hair grew thin and grey;  
She dwindled, as the fair full moon doth turn  
To swift decay and burn  
Her fire away.

One day remembering her kernel-stone  
She set it by a wall that faced the south;  
Dewed it with tears, hoped for a root,  
Watched for a waxing shoot,  
But there came none;  
It never saw the sun,  
It never felt the trickling moisture run:  
While with sunk eyes and faded mouth  
She dreamed of melons, as a traveller sees  
False waves in desert drouth  
With shade of leaf-crowned trees,  
And burns the thirstier in the sandful breeze.

She no more swept the house,  
Tended the fowls or cows,  
Fetched honey, kneaded cakes of wheat,  
Brought water from the brook:  
But sat down listless in the chimney-nook  
And would not eat.

Tender Lizzie could not bear  
To watch her sister's cankerous care  
Yet not to share.

She night and morning  
Caught the goblins' cry:  
'Come buy our orchard fruits,  
Come buy, come buy:—  
Beside the brook, along the glen,  
She heard the tramp of goblin men,  
The voice and stir  
Poor Laura could not hear;  
Longed to buy fruit to comfort her,  
But feared to pay too dear.  
She thought of Jeanie in her grave,  
Who should have been a bride;  
But who for joys brides hope to have  
Fell sick and died  
In her gay prime,  
In earliest Winter time,  
With the first glazing rime,  
With the first snow-fall of crisp Winter time.

Till Laura dwindling  
Seemed knocking at Death's door:  
Then Lizzie weighed no more  
Better and worse;  
But put a silver penny in her purse,  
Kissed Laura, crossed the heath with clumps of furze  
At twilight, halted by the brook:  
And for the first time in her life  
Began to listen and look.

Laughed every goblin  
When they spied her peeping:  
Came towards her hobbling,  
Flying, running, leaping,  
Puffing and blowing,  
Chuckling, clapping, crowing,

Clucking and gobbling,  
Mopping and mowing,  
Full of airs and graces,  
Pulling wry faces,  
Demure grimaces,  
Cat-like and rat-like,  
Ratel- and wombat-like.  
Snail-paced in a hurry,  
Parrot-voiced and whistler,  
Helter skelter, hurry skurry,  
Chattering like magpies,  
Fluttering like pigeons,  
Gliding like fishes,—  
Hugged her and kissed her:  
Squeezed and caressed her:  
Stretched up their dishes,  
Panniers, and plates:  
'Look at our apples  
Russet and dun,  
Bob at our cherries,  
Bite at our peaches,  
Citrons and dates,  
Grapes for the asking,  
Pears red with basking  
Out in the sun,  
Plums on their twigs;  
Pluck them and suck them,  
'Pomegranates, figs.'—

'Good folk,' said Lizzie,  
Mindful of Jeanie:  
'Give me much and many:—  
Held out her apron,  
Tossed them her penny.

'Nay, take a seat with us,  
Honour and eat with us,'  
They answered grinning:  
'Our feast is but beginning.  
Night yet is early,  
Warm and dew-pearly,  
Wakeful and starry:  
Such fruits as these  
No man can carry;  
Half their bloom would fly,  
Half their dew would dry,  
Half their flavour would pass by.  
Sit down and feast with us,  
Be welcome guest with us,  
Cheer you and rest with us.'—  
'Thank you,' said Lizzie: 'But one waits  
At home alone for me:  
So without further parleying,  
If you will not sell me any  
Of your fruits though much and many,  
Give me back my silver penny  
I tossed you for a fee.'—  
They began to scratch their pates,  
No longer wagging, purring,  
But visibly demurring,  
Grunting and snarling.  
One called her proud,  
Cross-grained, uncivil;  
Their tones waxed loud,  
Their looks were evil.  
Lashing their tails  
They trod and hustled her,  
Elbowed and jostled her,  
Clawed with their nails,

Barking, mewling, hissing, mocking,  
Tore her gown and soiled her stocking,  
Twitched her hair out by the roots,  
Stamped upon her tender feet,  
Held her hands and squeezed their fruits  
Against her mouth to make her eat.

White and golden Lizzie stood,  
Like a lily in a flood,—  
Like a rock of blue-veined stone  
Lashed by tides obstreperously,—  
Like a beacon left alone  
In a hoary roaring sea,  
Sending up a golden fire,—  
Like a fruit-crowned orange-tree  
White with blossoms honey-sweet  
Sore beset by wasp and bee,—  
Like a royal virgin town  
Topped with gilded dome and spire  
Close beleaguered by a fleet  
Mad to tug her standard down.

One may lead a horse to water,  
Twenty cannot make him drink.  
Though the goblins cuffed and caught her,  
Coaxed and fought her,  
Bullied and besought her,  
Scratched her, pinched her black as ink,  
Kicked and knocked her,  
Mauled and mocked her,  
Lizzie uttered not a word;  
Would not open lip from lip  
Lest they should cram a mouthful in:  
But laughed in heart to feel the drip

Of juice that syrugged all her face,  
And lodged in dimples of her chin,  
And streaked her neck which quaked like curd.  
At last the evil people  
Worn out by her resistance  
Flung back her penny, kicked their fruit  
Along whichever road they took,  
Not leaving root or stone or shoot;  
Some writhed into the ground,  
Some dived into the brook  
With ring and ripple,  
Some scudded on the gale without a sound,  
Some vanished in the distance.

In a smart, ache, tingle,  
Lizzie went her way;  
Knew not was it night or day;  
Sprang up the bank, tore thro' the furze,  
Threaded copse and dingle,  
And heard her penny jingle  
Bouncing in her purse,—  
Its bounce was music to her ear.  
She ran and ran  
As if she feared some goblin man  
Dogged her with gibe or curse  
Or something worse:  
But not one goblin scurried after,  
Nor was she pricked by fear;  
The kind heart made her windy-paced  
That urged her home quite out of breath with haste  
And inward laughter.

She cried 'Laura,' up the garden,  
'Did you miss me?  
Come and kiss me.

Never mind my bruises,  
Hug me, kiss me, suck my juices  
Squeezed from goblin fruits for you,  
Goblin pulp and goblin dew.  
Eat me, drink me, love me;  
Laura, make much of me:  
For your sake I have braved the glen  
And had to do with goblin merchant men.'

Laura started from her chair,  
Flung her arms up in the air,  
Clutched her hair:  
'Lizzie, Lizzie, have you tasted  
For my sake the fruit forbidden?  
Must your light like mine be hidden,  
Your young life like mine be wasted,  
Undone in mine undoing  
And ruined in my ruin,  
Thirsty, cankered, goblin-ridden?'—  
She clung about her sister,  
Kissed and kissed and kissed her:  
Tears once again  
Refreshed her shrunken eyes,  
Dropping like rain  
After long sultry drouth;  
Shaking with aguish fear, and pain,  
She kissed and kissed her with a hungry mouth.

Her lips began to scorch,  
That juice was wormwood to her tongue,  
She loathed the feast:  
Writhing as one possessed she leaped and sung,  
Rent all her robe, and wrung  
Her hands in lamentable haste,  
And beat her breast.

Her locks streamed like the torch  
Borne by a racer at full speed,  
Or like the mane of horses in their flight,  
Or like an eagle when she stems the light  
Straight towards the sun,  
Or like a caged thing freed,  
Or like a flying flag when armies run.

Swift fire spread through her veins, knocked at  
her heart,  
Met the fire smouldering there  
And overbore its lesser flame;  
She gorged on bitterness without a name:  
Ah! fool, to choose such part  
Of soul-consuming care!  
Sense failed in the mortal strife:  
Like the watch-tower of a town  
Which an earthquake shatters down,  
Like a lightning-stricken mast,  
Like a wind-uprooted tree  
Spun about,  
Like a foam-topped waterspout  
Cast down headlong in the sea,  
She fell at last;  
Pleasure past and anguish past,  
Is it death or is it life?

Life out of death.  
That night long Lizzie watched by her,  
Counted her pulse's flagging stir,  
Felt for her breath,  
Held water to her lips, and cooled her face  
With tears and fanning leaves:  
But when the first birds chirped about their eaves,



And early reapers plodded to the place  
Of golden sheaves,  
And dew-wet grass  
Bowed in the morning winds so brisk to pass,  
And new buds with new day  
Opened of cup-like lilies on the stream,  
Laura awoke as from a dream,  
Laughed in the innocent old way,  
Hugged Lizzie but not twice or thrice;  
Her gleaming locks showed not one thread of grey,  
Her breath was sweet as May  
And light danced in her eyes.

Days, weeks, months, years  
Afterwards, when both were wives  
With children of their own;  
Their mother-hearts beset with fears,  
Their lives bound up in tender lives;  
Laura would call the little ones  
And tell them of her early prime,  
Those pleasant days long gone  
Of not-returning time:  
Would talk about the haunted glen,  
The wicked, quaint fruit-merchant men,  
Their fruits like honey to the throat  
But poison in the blood;  
(Men sell not such in any town:)  
Would tell them how her sister stood  
In deadly peril to do her good,  
And win the fiery antidote:  
Then joining hands to little hands  
Would bid them cling together,  
'For there is no friend like a sister  
In calm or stormy weather;

To cheer one on the tedious way,  
To fetch one if one goes astray,  
To lift one if one totters down,  
To strengthen whilst one stands.'

### A BIRTHDAY

My heart is like a singing bird  
Whose nest is in a watered shoot;  
My heart is like an apple-tree  
Whose boughs are bent with thickset fruit;  
My heart is like a rainbow shell  
That paddles in a halcyon sea;  
My heart is gladder than all these  
Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down;  
Hang it with vair and purple dyes;  
Carve it in doves, and pomegranates,  
And peacocks with a hundred eyes;  
Work it in gold and silver grapes,  
In leaves, and silver fleurs-de-lys;  
Because the birthday of my life  
Is come, my love is come to me.

### REMEMBER

REMEMBER me when I am gone away,  
Gone far away into the silent land;  
When you can no more hold me by the hand,  
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.  
Remember me when no more day by day  
You tell me of our future that you planne  
Only remember me; you understand  
It will be late to counsel then or pray.

Yet if you should forget me for a while  
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:  
For if the darkness and corruption leave  
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,  
Better by far you should forget and smile  
Than that you should remember and be sad.

## UP-HILL

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?  
Yes, to the very end.  
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?  
From morn to night, my friend.  
But is there for the night a resting-place?  
A roof for when the slow, dark hours begin.  
May not the darkness hide it from my face?  
You cannot miss that inn.  
Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?  
Those who have gone before.  
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?  
They will not keep you standing at that door.  
Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?  
Of labour you shall find the sum.  
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?  
Yea, beds for all who come.

## THE PRINCE'S PROGRESS

TILL all sweet gums and juices flow,  
Till the blossom of blossoms blow,  
The long hours go and come and go,  
The bride she sleepeth, waketh, sleepeth,  
Waiting for one whose coming is slow:—  
Hark! the bride weepeth.

‘How long shall I wait, come heat come rime?’—  
‘Till the strong Prince comes, who must come in  
time’

(Her women say), ‘there’s a mountain to climb,  
A river to ford. Sleep, dream and sleep;  
Sleep’ (they say): ‘we’ve muffled the chime,  
Better dream than weep.’

In his world-end palace the strong Prince sat,  
Taking his ease on cushion and mat,  
Close at hand lay his staff and his hat.

‘When wilt thou start? the bride waits, O  
youth.’—

‘Now the moon’s at full; I tarried for that,  
Now I start in truth.

‘But tell me first, true voice of my doom,  
Of my veiled bride in her maiden bloom;  
Keeps she watch through glare and through gloom,  
Watch for me asleep and awake?’—

‘Spell-bound she watches in one white room,  
And is patient for thy sake.

‘By her head lilies and rosebuds grow;  
The lilies droop, will the rosebuds blow?  
The silver slim lilies hang the head low;

Their stream is scanty, their sunshine rare:  
Let the sun blaze out, and let the stream flow,  
They will blossom and wax fair.

‘Red and white poppies grow at her feet,  
The blood-red wait for sweet summer heat,  
Wrapped in bud-coats hairy and neat;  
But the white buds swell, one day they will burst,  
Will open their death-cups drowsy and sweet—  
Which will open the first?’

Then a hundred sad voices lifted a wail,  
And a hundred glad voices piped on the gale:  
'Time is short, life is short,' they took up the tale:  
    'Life is sweet, love is sweet, use to-day while you  
        may;  
Love is sweet, and to-morrow may fail;  
    Love is sweet, use to-day.'

While the song swept by, beseeching and meek,  
Up rose the Prince with a flush on his cheek,  
Up he rose to stir and to seek,  
    Going forth in the joy of his strength;  
Strong of limb if of purpose weak,  
    Starting at length.

Forth he set in the breezy morn,  
Crossing green fields of nodding corn,  
As goodly a Prince as ever was born;  
    Carolling with the carolling lark;—  
Sure his bride will be won and worn,  
    Ere fall of the dark.

So light his step, so merry his smile,  
A milkmaid loitered beside a stile,  
Set down her pail and rested awhile,  
    A wave-haired milkmaid, rosy and white;  
The Prince, who had journeyed at least a mile,  
    Grew athirst at the sight.

'Will you give me a morning draught?'—  
'You're kindly welcome,' she said, and laughed.  
He lifted the pail, new milk he quaffed;  
    Then wiping his curly black beard like silk:  
'Whitest cow that ever was calved  
    Surely gave you this milk.'

Was it milk now, or was it cream ?

Was she a maid, or an evil dream ?

Her eyes began to glitter and gleam ;

He would have gone, but he stayed instead ;

Green they gleamed as he looked in them :

‘Give me my fee,’ she said.—

‘I will give you a jewel of gold.’—

‘Not so ; gold is heavy and cold.’—

‘I will give you a velvet fold

Of foreign work your beauty to deck.’—

‘Better I like my kerchief rolled

Light and white round my neck.’—

‘Nay,’ cried he, ‘but fix your own fee.’—

She laughed, ‘You may give the full moon to me ;

Or else sit under this apple-tree

Here for one idle day by my side ;

After that I’ll let you go free,

And the world is wide.’

Loth to stay, but to leave her slack,

He half turned away, then he quite turned back :

For courtesy’s sake he could not lack

To redeem his own royal pledge ;

Ahead too the windy heaven lowered black

With a fire-cloven edge.

So he stretched his length in the apple-tree shade,

Lay and laughed and talked to the maid,

Who twisted her hair in a cunning braid

And writhed it shining in serpent-coils,

And held him a day and night fast laid

In her subtle toils.

At the death of night and the birth of day,  
When the owl left off his sober play,  
And the bat hung himself out of the way,  
    Woke the song of mavis and merle,  
And heaven put off its hodden grey  
    For mother-o'-pearl.

Peeped up dasies here and there,  
Here, there, and everywhere;  
Rose a hopeful lark in the air,  
    Spreading out towards the sun his breast;  
While the moon set solemn and fair  
    Away in the West.

'Up, up, up,' called the watchman lark,  
In his clear réveillé: 'Hearken, oh hark!  
Press to the high goal, fly to the mark.

Up, O sluggard, new morn is born;  
If still asleep when the night falls dark,  
    Thou must wait a second morn.'

'Up, up, up,' sad glad voices swelled  
'So the tree falls and lies as it's felled.  
Be thy bands loosed, O sleeper, long held  
    In sweet sleep whose end is not sweet.  
Be the slackness girt and the softness quelled  
    And the slowness fleet.'

Off he set. The grass grew rare,  
A blight lurked in the darkening air,  
The very moss grew hueless and spare  
    The last daisy stood all astunt;  
Behind his back the soil lay bare,  
    But barer in front.

A land of chasm and rent, a land  
Of rugged blackness on either hand:  
If water trickled its track was tanned  
    With an edge of rust to the chink;  
If one stamped on stone or on sand  
    It returned a clink.

A lifeless land, a loveless land,  
Without lair or nest on either hand:  
Only scorpions jerked in the sand,  
    Black as black iron, or dusty pale;  
From point to point sheer rock was manned  
    By scorpions in mail.

A land of neither life nor death,  
Where no man buildeth or fashioneth,  
Where none draws living or dying breath;  
    No man cometh or goeth there,  
No man doeth, seeketh, saith,  
    In the stagnant air.

Some old volcanic upset must  
Have rent the crust and blackened the crust;  
Wrenched and ribbed it beneath its dust  
    Above earth's molten centre at seethe,  
Heaved and heaped it by huge upthrust  
    Of fire beneath.

Untrodden before, untrodden since:  
Tedious land for a social Prince;  
Halting, he scanned the outs and ins,  
    Endless, labyrinthine, grim,  
Of the solitude that made him wince,  
    Laying wait for him.



By bulging rock and gaping cleft,  
Even of half mere daylight reft,  
Rueful he peered to right and left,  
Muttering in his altered mood:  
‘The fate is hard that weaves my weft,  
Though my lot be good.’

Dim the changes of day to night,  
Of night scarce dark to day not bright.  
Still his road wound towards the right,  
Still he went, and still he went,  
Till one night he espied a light,  
In his discontent.

Out it flashed from a yawn-mouthed cave,  
Like a red-hot eye from a grave.  
No man stood there of whom to crave  
Rest for wayfarer plodding by:  
Though the tenant were churl or knave  
The Prince might try.

In he passed and tarried not,  
Groping his way from spot to spot,  
Towards where the cavern flare glowed hot:—  
An old, old mortal, cramped and double,  
Was peering into a seething-pot,  
In a world of trouble.

The veriest atomy he looked,  
With grimy fingers clutching and crooked,  
Tight skin, a nose all bony and hooked,  
And a shaking, sharp, suspicious way;  
His blinking eyes had scarcely brooked  
The light of day.

Stared the Prince, for the sight was new;  
Stared, but asked without more ado:  
‘May a weary traveller lodge with you,  
Old father, here in your lair?  
In your country the inns seem few,  
And scanty the fare.’

The head turned not to hear him speak;  
The old voice whistled as through a leak  
(Out it came in a quavering squeak):  
‘Work for wage is a bargain fit:  
If there’s aught of mine that you seek  
You must work for it.

‘Buried alive from light and air  
This year is the hundredth year,  
I feed my fire with a sleepless care,  
Watching my potion wane or wax:  
Elixir of Life is simmering there,  
And but one thing lacks.

‘If you’re fain to lodge here with me,  
Take that pair of bellows you see—  
Too heavy for my old hands they be—  
Take the bellows and puff and puff:  
When the steam curls rosy and free  
The broth’s boiled enough.

‘Then take your choice of all I have;  
I will give you life if you crave.  
Already I’m mildewed for the grave,  
So first myself I must drink my fill:  
But all the rest may be yours, to save  
Whomever you will.’

'Done,' quoth the Prince, and the bargain stood.  
First he piled on resinous wood,  
Next plied the bellows in hopeful mood;  
Thinking, 'My love and I will live.  
If I tarry, why life is good,  
And she may forgive.'

The pot began to bubble and boil;  
The old man cast in essence and oil,  
He stirred all up with a triple coil  
Of gold and silver and iron wire,  
Dredged in a pinch of virgin soil,  
And fed the fire.

But still the steam curled watery white;  
Night turned to day and day to night;  
One thing lacked, by his feeble sight  
Unseen, unguessed by his feeble mind:  
Life might miss him, but Death the blight  
Was sure to find.

So when the hundredth year was full  
The thread was cut and finished the school.  
Death snapped the old worn-out tool,  
Snapped him short while he stood and stirred  
(Though stiff he stood as a stiff-necked mule)  
With never a word.

Thus at length the old crab was nipped.  
The dead hand slipped, the dead finger dipped  
In the broth as the dead man slipped,—  
That same instant, a rosy red  
Flushed the steam, and quivered and clipped  
Round the dead old head.

The last ingredient was supplied  
(Unless the dead man mistook or lied).

Up started the Prince, he cast aside  
The bellows plied through the tedious trial,  
Made sure that his host had died,  
And filled a phial.

‘One night’s rest,’ thought the Prince: ‘This done,  
Forth I start with the rising sun:  
With the morrow I rise and run,  
Come what will of wind or of weather.  
This draught of Life when my Bride is won  
We’ll drink together.’

Thus the dead man stayed in his grave,  
Self-chosen, the dead man in his cave;  
There he stayed, were he fool or knave,  
Or honest seeker who had not found:  
While the Prince outside was prompt to crave  
Sleep on the ground.

‘If she watches, go bid her sleep;  
Bid her sleep, for the road is steep:  
He can sleep who holdeth her cheap,  
Sleep and wake and sleep again.  
Let him sow, one day he shall reap,  
Let him sow the grain.

‘When there blows a sweet garden rose,  
Let it bloom and wither if no man knows:  
But if one knows when the sweet thing blows,  
Knows, and lets it open and drop,  
If but a nettle his garden grows  
He hath earned the crop.’

Through his sleep the summons rang,  
Into his ears it sobbed and it sang.  
Slow he woke with a drowsy pang,  
Shook himself without much debate,  
Turned where he saw green branches hang,  
Started though late.

For the black land was travelled o'er,  
He should see the grim land no more.  
A flowering country stretched before  
His face when the lovely day came back:  
He hugged the phial of Life he bore,  
And resumed his track.

By willow courses he took his path,  
Spied what a nest the kingfisher hath,  
Marked the fields green to aftermath,  
Marked where the red-brown field-mouse ran,  
Loitered a while for a deep-stream bath,  
Yawned for a fellow-man.

Up on the hills not a soul in view,  
In the vale not many nor few;  
Leaves, still leaves, and nothing new.  
It's oh for a second maiden, at least,  
To bear the flagon, and taste it too,  
And flavour the feast.

Lagging he moved, and apt to swerve;  
Lazy of limb, but quick of nerve.  
At length the water-bed took a curve,  
The deep river swept its bankside bare;  
Waters streamed from the hill-reserve—  
Waters here, waters there.

High above, and deep below,  
Bursting, bubbling, swelling the flow,  
Like hill torrents after the snow,—  
    Bubbling, gurgling, in whirling strife,  
Swaying, sweeping, to and fro,—  
    He must swim for his life.

Which way?—which way?—his eyes grew dim  
With the dizzying whirl—which way to swim?  
The thunderous downshoot deafened him;  
    Half he choked in the lashing spray:  
Life is sweet, and the grave is grim—  
    Which way?—which way?

A flash of light, a shout from the strand:  
‘This way—this way; here lies the land!’  
His phial clutched in one drowning hand;  
    He catches—misses—catches a rope;  
His feet slip on the slipping sand:  
    Is there life?—is there hope?

Just saved, without pulse or breath,—  
Scarcely saved from the gulp of death;  
Laid where a willow shadoweth—  
    Laid where a swelling turf is smooth.  
(O Bride! but the Bridegroom lingereth  
    For all thy sweet youth.)

Kind hands do and undo,  
Kind voices whisper and coo:  
‘I will chafe his hands’—‘And I’—‘And you  
    Raise his head, put his hair aside.’  
(If many laugh, one well may rue:  
    Sleep on, thou Bride.)

So the Prince was tended with care:  
One wrung foul ooze from his clustered hair;  
Two chafed his hands, and did not spare;  
But one held his drooping head breast-high,  
Till his eyes oped, and at unaware  
They met eye to eye.

Oh, a moon face in a shadowy place,  
And a light touch and a winsome grace,  
And a thrilling tender voice that says:  
‘Safe from the waters that seek the sea—  
Cold waters by rugged ways—  
Safe with me.’

While overhead bird whistles to bird,  
And round about plays a gamesome herd:  
‘Safe with us’—some take up the word—  
‘Safe with us, dear lord and friend:  
All the sweeter if long deferred  
Is rest in the end.’

Had he stayed to weigh and to scan,  
He had been more or less than a man:  
He did what a young man can,  
Spoke of toil and an arduous way—  
Toil to-morrow, while golden ran  
The sands of to-day.

Slip past, slip fast,  
Uncounted hours from first to last,  
Many hours till the last is past,  
Many hours dwindling to one—  
One hour whose die is cast,  
One last hour gone.

Come, gone—gone for ever—  
Gone as an unreturning river—  
Gone as to death the merriest liver—  
Gone as the year at the dying fall—  
To-morrow, to-day, yesterday, never—  
Gone once for all.

Came at length the starting-day,  
With last words, and last last words to say,  
With bodiless cries from far away—  
Chiding wailing voices that rang  
Like a trumpet-call to the tug and fray;  
And thus they sang:

‘Is there life?—the lamp burns low;  
Is there hope?—the coming is slow:  
The promise promised so long ago,  
The long promise, has not been kept.  
Does she live?—does she die?—she slumbers so  
Who so oft has wept.

‘Does she live?—does she die?—she languisheth  
As a lily drooping to death,  
As a drought-worn bird with failing breath,  
As a lovely vine without a stay,  
As a tree whereof the owner saith,  
“Hew it down to-day.”’

Stung by that word the Prince was fain  
To start on his tedious road again.  
He crossed the stream where a ford was plain,  
He clomb the opposite bank though steep,  
And swore to himself to strain and attain  
Ere he tasted sleep.



Huge before him a mountain frowned  
With foot of rock on the valley ground,  
And head with snows incessant crowned,  
    And a cloud mantle about its strength,  
And a path which the wild goat hath not found  
    In its breadth and length.

But he was strong to do and dare:  
If a host had withstood him there,  
He had braved a host with little care  
    In his lusty youth and his pride,  
Tough to grapple though weak to snare.  
    He comes, O Bride.

Up he went where the goat scarce clings,  
Up where the eagle folds her wings,  
Past the green line of living things,  
    Where the sun cannot warm the cold,—  
Up he went as a flame enrings  
    Where there seems no hold.

Up a fissure barren and black,  
Till the eagles tired upon his track,  
And the clouds were left behind his back,  
    Up till the utmost peak was past,  
Then he gasped for breath and his strength fell  
    slack;  
    He paused at last.

Before his face a valley spread  
Where fatness laughed, wine, oil, and bread,  
Where all fruit-trees their sweetness shed,  
    Where all birds made love to their kind,  
Where jewels twinkled, and gold lay red  
    And not hard to find.

Midway down the mountain side  
(On its green slope the path was wide)  
Stood a house for a royal bride,  
Built all of changing opal stone,  
The royal palace, till now descried  
In his dreams alone.

Less bold than in days of yore,  
Doubting now though never before,  
Doubting he goes and lags the more:  
Is the time late? does the day grow dim?  
Rose, will she open the crimson core  
Of her heart to him?

Take heart of grace! the potion of Life  
May go far to woo him a wife:  
If she frown, yet a lover's strife  
Lightly raised can be laid again:  
A hasty word is never the knife  
To cut love in twain.

Far away stretched the royal land,  
Fed by dew, by a spice-wind fanned:  
Light labour more, and his foot would stand  
On the threshold, all labour done;  
Easy pleasure laid at his hand,  
And the dear Bride won.

His slackening steps pause at the gate—  
Does she wake or sleep?—the time is late—  
Does she sleep now, or watch and wait?  
She has watched, she has waited long,  
Watching athwart the golden grate  
With a patient song.

Fling the golden portals wide,  
The Bridegroom comes to his promised Bride;  
Draw the gold-stiff curtains aside,  
Let them look on each other's face,  
She in her meekness, he in his pride—  
Day wears apace.

Day is over, the day that wore.  
What is this that comes through the door,  
The face covered, the feet before?  
This that coming takes his breath;  
This Bride not seen, to be seen no more  
Save of Bridegroom Death?

Veiled figures carrying her  
Sweep by yet make no stir;  
There is a smell of spice and myrrh,  
A bride-chant burdened with one name;  
The bride-song rises steadier  
Than the torches' flame:

'Too late for love, too late for joy,  
Too late, too late!  
You loitered on the road too long,  
You trifled at the gate:  
The enchanted dove upon her branch  
Died without a mate;  
The enchanted princess in her tower  
Slept, died, behind the grate;  
Her heart was starving all this while  
You made it wait.

'Ten years ago, five years ago,  
One year ago,  
Even then you had arrived in time,  
Though somewhat slow;

Then you had known her living face  
Which now you cannot know:  
The frozen fountain would have leaped,  
The buds gone on to blow,  
The warm south wind would have awaked  
To melt the snow.

‘Is she fair now as she lies ?  
Once she was fair ;  
Meet queen for any kingly king,  
With gold-dust on her hair.  
Now these are poppies in her locks,  
White poppies she must wear ;  
Must wear a veil to shroud her face  
And the want graven there:  
Or is the hunger fed at length,  
Cast off the care ?

‘We never saw her with a smile  
Or with a frown ;  
Her bed seemed never soft to her,  
Though tossed of down ;  
She little heeded what she wore,  
Kirtle, or wreath, or gown ;  
We think her white brows often ached  
Beneath her crown,  
Till silvery hairs showed in her locks  
That used to be so brown.

‘We never heard her speak in haste:  
Her tones were sweet,  
And modulated just so much  
As it was meet:  
Her heart sat silent through the noise  
And concourse of the street.

There was no hurry in her hands,  
No hurry in her feet;  
There was no bliss drew nigh to her,  
That she might run to greet.

‘You should have wept her yesterday,  
Wasting upon her bed:  
But wherefore should you weep to-day  
That she is dead?  
Lo, we who love weep not to-day,  
But crown her royal head.  
Let be these poppies that we strew,  
Your roses are too red:  
Let be these poppies, not for you  
Cut down and spread.’

‘A BRUISED REED SHALL HE NOT BREAK’

I WILL accept thy will to do and be,  
Thy hatred and intolerance of sin,  
Thy will at least to love, that burns within  
And thirsteth after Me:  
So will I render fruitful, blessing still,  
The germs and small beginnings in thy heart,  
Because thy will cleaves to the better part.—  
Alas, I cannot will.

Dost not thou will, poor soul? Yet I receive  
The inner unseen longings of the soul,  
I guide them turning towards Me; I control  
And charm hearts till they grieve:  
If thou desire, it yet shall come to pass,  
Though thou but wish indeed to choose My love;  
For I have power in earth and heaven above.—  
I cannot wish, alas!

What, neither choose nor wish to choose? and yet  
 I still must strive to win thee and constrain:  
 For thee I hung upon the cross in pain,  
     How then can I forget?  
 If thou as yet dost neither love, nor hate,  
 Nor choose, nor wish,—resign thyself, be still  
 Till I infuse love, hatred, longing, will.—  
     I do not deprecate.

### THE THREE ENEMIES

#### THE FLESH

‘SWEET, thou art pale.’  
     ‘More pale to see,  
 Christ hung upon the cruel tree  
 And bore His Father’s wrath for me.’  
 ‘Sweet, thou art sad.’  
     ‘Beneath a rod  
 More heavy, Christ for my sake trod  
 The winepress of the wrath of God.’  
 ‘Sweet, thou art weary.’  
     ‘Not so Christ:  
 Whose mighty love of me sufficed  
 For Strength, Salvation, Eucharist.’  
 ‘Sweet, thou art footsore.’  
     ‘If I bleed,  
 His feet have bled: yea, in my need  
 His Heart once bled for mine indeed.’

#### THE WORLD

‘Sweet, thou art young.’  
     ‘So He was young  
 Who for my sake in silence hung  
 Upon the Cross with Passion wrung.’

‘Look, thou art fair.’

‘He was more fair  
Than men, Who deigned for me to wear  
A visage marred beyond compare.’

‘And thou hast riches.’

‘Daily bread:  
All else is His; Who living, dead,  
For me lacked where to lay His Head.’

‘And life is sweet.’

‘It was not so  
To Him, Whose Cup did overflow  
With mine unutterable woe.’

#### THE DEVIL

‘Thou drinkest deep.’

‘When Christ would sup  
He drained the dregs from out my cup:  
So how should I be lifted up?’

‘Thou shalt win Glory.’

‘In the skies,  
Lord Jesus, cover up mine eyes  
Lest they should look on vanities.’

‘Thou shalt have Knowledge.’

‘Helpless dust!  
In Thee, O Lord, I put my trust:  
Answer Thou for me, Wise and Just.’

‘And Might.’—

‘Get thee behind me. Lord,  
Who hast redeemed and not abhorred  
My soul, oh keep it by Thy Word.’

## CHARLES STUART CALVERLEY

1831-1884

## BALLAD

THE auld wife sat at her ivied door,  
     *(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)*  
 A thing she had frequently done before;  
     And her spectacles lay on her aproned knees.  
 The piper he piped on the hill-top high,  
     *(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)*  
 Till the cow said, 'I die,' and the goose asked 'why?'  
     And the dog said nothing, but searched for fleas.  
 The farmer he strode through the square farmyard;  
     *(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)*  
 His last brew of ale was a trifle hard—  
     The connexion of which with the plot one sees.  
 The farmer's daughter hath frank blue eyes;  
     *(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)*  
 She hears the rooks caw in the windy skies,  
     As she sits at her lattice and shells her peas.  
 The farmer's daughter hath ripe red lips;  
     *(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)*  
 If you try to approach her, away she skips  
     Over tables and chairs with apparent ease.  
 The farmer's daughter hath soft brown hair;  
     *(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)*  
 And I met with a ballad, I can't tell where,  
     Which wholly consisted of lines like these.  
 She sat with her hands 'neath her dimpled cheeks,  
     *(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)*  
 And spake not a word. While a lady speaks  
     There is hope, but she didn't even sneeze.



She sat, with her hands 'neath her crimson cheeks,  
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*)  
She gave up mending her father's breeks,  
And let the cat roll in her new chemise.

She sat, with her hands 'neath her burning cheeks,  
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*)  
And gazed at the piper for thirteen weeks;  
Then she followed him out o'er the misty leas.

Her sheep 'followed her, as their tails did them.  
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*)  
And this song is considered a perfect gem,  
And as to the meaning, it's what you please.

## RICHARD WATSON DIXON

1833-1900

### TO PEACE

O PEACE, O Dove, O shape of the Holy Ghost,  
I would not vex thee with too subtle thought,  
Put thee in fear by hopes, send thee to coast  
Regions unknown for what I dearest sought.  
To rough delights I would not open course,  
Nor thy composure fray with vague desire,  
Nor aspiration hold that did thee force,  
Nor move a step that I could not retire.

Nay, nay, I pray thee, close thy startled eye,  
Compose again thy self-stirred plumes, nor aim  
At other station, in timidity  
Of fancied plots, which here I all disclaim.  
Well, fly then! for perchance from heavenward  
flight  
Gentler on me thou mayst again alight.

## JAMES THOMSON ('B. V.')

1834-1882

AS WE RUSH, AS WE RUSH IN THE TRAIN

As we rush, as we rush in the train,  
 The trees and the houses go wheeling back,  
 But the starry heavens above the plain  
 Come flying on our track.

All the beautiful stars of the sky,  
 The silver doves of the forest of Night,  
 Over the dull earth swarm and fly,  
 Companions of our flight.

We will rush ever on without fear;  
 Let the goal be far, the flight be fleet!  
 For we carry the Heavens with us, dear,  
 While the Earth slips from our feet!

## WILLIAM MORRIS

1834-1896

## SUMMER DAWN

PRAY but one prayer for me 'twixt thy closed lips,  
 Think but one thought of me up in the stars.  
 The summer night waneth, the morning light slips,  
 Faint and grey 'twixt the leaves of the aspen,  
 betwixt the cloud-bars,  
 That are patiently waiting there for the dawn:  
 Patient and colourless, though Heaven's gold  
 Waits to float through them along with the sun.  
 Far out in the meadows, above the young corn,  
 The heavy elms wait, and restless and cold  
 The uneasy wind rises; the roses are dun;

Through the long twilight they pray for the dawn,  
Round the lone house in the midst of the corn.

Speak but one word to me over the corn,  
Over the tender, bowed locks of the corn.

FROM 'THE LIFE AND DEATH OF JASON'

'SING on', he said, 'but let me dream of bliss  
If I should sleep, nor yet forget thy kiss.'  
She touched his lips with hers, and then began  
A sweet song sung not yet to any man.

'I know a little garden close  
Set thick with lily and red rose,  
Where I would wander if I might  
From dewy dawn to dewy night,  
And have one with me wandering.

'And though within it no birds sing,  
And though no pillared house is there,  
And though the apple boughs are bare  
Of fruit and blossom, would to God  
Her feet upon the green grass trod,  
And I beheld them as before. .

'There comes a murmur from the shore,  
And in the place two fair streams are,  
Drawn from the purple hills afar,  
Drawn down unto the restless sea;  
The hills whose flowers ne'er fed the bee,  
The shore no ship has ever seen,  
Still beaten by the billows green,  
Whose murmur comes unceasingly  
Unto the place for which I cry.

'For which I cry both day and night,  
For which I let slip all delight,

That maketh me both deaf and blind,  
Careless to win, unskilled to find,  
And quick to lose what all men seek.

‘Yet tottering as I am, and weak,  
Still have I left a little breath  
To seek within the jaws of death  
An entrance to that happy place,  
To seek the unforgotten face  
Once seen, once kissed, once reft from me  
Anigh the murmuring of the sea.’

## TALES FROM ‘THE EARTHLY PARADISE’

### (1) ATALANTA’S RACE.

#### ARGUMENT.

Atalanta, daughter of King Schœneus, not willing to lose her virgin’s estate, made it a law to all suitors that they should run a race with her in the public place, and if they failed to overcome her should die unrevenge’d; and thus many brave men perished. At last came Milanion, the son of Amphidamas, who, outrunning her with the help of Venus, gained the virgin and wedded her.

THROUGH thick Arcadian woods a hunter went,  
Following the beasts up, on a fresh spring day;  
But since his horn-tipped bow but seldom bent,  
Now at the noontide nought had happed to slay,  
Within a vale he called his hounds away,  
Harkening the echoes of his lone voice cling  
About the cliffs and through the beech-trees ring.

But when they ended, still awhile he stood,  
And but the sweet familiar thrush could hear,  
And all the day-long noises of the wood,  
And o’er the dry leaves of the vanished year  
His hounds’ feet pattering as they drew anear,

And heavy breathing from their heads low hung,  
To see the mighty cornel bow unstrung.

Then smiling did he turn to leave the place,  
But with his first step some new fleeting thought  
A shadow cast across his sun-burnt face;  
I think the golden net that April brought  
From some warm world his wavering soul had  
    caught;  
For, sunk in vague sweet longing, did he go  
Betwixt the trees with doubtful steps and slow.

Yet howsoever slow he went, at last  
The trees grew sparser, and the wood was done;  
Whereon one farewell backward look he cast,  
Then, turning round to see what place was won,  
With shaded eyes looked underneath the sun,  
And o'er green meads and new-turned furrows  
    brown  
Beheld the gleaming of King Schoëneus' town.

So thitherward he turned, and on each side  
The folk were busy on the teeming land,  
And man and maid from the brown furrows cried,  
Or midst the newly-blossomed vines did stand,  
And as the rustic weapon pressed the hand  
Thought of the nodding of the well-filled ear,  
Or how the knife the heavy bunch should shear.

Merry it was: about him sung the birds,  
The spring flowers bloomed along the firm dry road,  
The sleek-skinned mothers of the sharp-horned herds  
Now for the barefoot milking-maidens lowed;  
While from the freshness of his blue abode,  
Glad his death-bearing arrows to forget,  
The broad sun blazed, nor scattered plagues as yet.

Through such fair things unto the gates he came,  
And found them open, as though peace were there;  
Wherethrough, unquestioned of his race or name,  
He entered, and along the streets 'gan fare,  
Which at the first of folk were well-nigh bare;  
But pressing on, and going more hastily,  
Men hurrying too he 'gan at last to see.

Following the last of these, he still pressed on,  
Until an open space he came unto,  
Where wreaths of fame had oft been lost and won,  
For feats of strength folk there were wont to do.  
And now our hunter looked for something new,  
Because the whole wide space was bare, and stilled  
The high seats were, with eager people filled.

There with the others to a seat he gat,  
Whence he beheld a broidered canopy,  
'Neath which in fair array King Schoeneus sat  
Upon his throne with councillors thereby;  
And underneath his well-wrought seat and high,  
He saw a golden image of the sun,  
A silver image of the Fleet-foot One.

A brazen altar stood beneath their feet  
Whereon a thin flame flickered in the wind,  
Nigh this a herald clad in raiment meet  
Made ready even now his horn to wind,  
By whom a huge man held a sword, entwined  
With yellow flowers; these stood a little space  
From off the altar, nigh the starting-place.

And there two runners did the sign abide  
Foot set to foot,—a young man slim and fair,  
Crisp-haired, well knit, with firm limbs often tried  
In places where no man his strength may spare;  
Dainty his thin coat was, and on his hair

A golden circlet of renown he wore,  
And in his hand an olive garland bore,

But on this day with whom shall he contend?  
A maid stood by him like Diana clad  
When in the woods she lists her bow to bend,  
Too fair for one to look on and be glad,  
Who scarcely yet has thirty summers had,  
If he must still behold her from afar;  
Too fair to let the world live free from war.

She seemed all earthly matters to forget;  
Of all tormenting lines her face was clear,  
Her wide grey eyes upon the goal were set  
Calm and unmoved as though no soul were near;  
But her foe trembled as a man in fear,  
Nor from her loveliness one moment turned  
His anxious face with fierce desire that burned.

Now through the hush there broke the trumpet's  
    clang  
Just as the setting sun made eventide.  
Then from light feet a spurt of dust there sprang,  
And swiftly were they running side by side;  
But silent did the thronging folk abide  
Until the turning-post was reached at last,  
And round about it still abreast they passed.

But when the people saw how close they ran,  
When half-way to the starting-point they were,  
A cry of joy broke forth, whereat the man  
Headed the white-foot runner, and drew near  
Unto the very end of all his fear;  
And scarce his straining feet the ground could feel,  
And bliss unhopèd for o'er his heart 'gan steal.



But midst the loud victorious shouts he heard  
Her footsteps drawing nearer, and the sound  
Of fluttering raiment, and thereat afeard  
His flushed and eager face he turned around,  
And even then he felt her past him bound  
Fleet as the wind, but scarcely saw her there  
Till on the goal she laid her fingers fair.

There stood she breathing like a little child  
Amid some warlike clamour laid asleep,  
For no victorious joy her red lips smiled,  
Her cheek its wonted freshness did but keep;  
No glance lit up her clear grey eyes and deep,  
Though some divine thought softened all her face  
As once more rang the trumpet through the place.

But her late foe stopped short amidst his course,  
One moment gazed upon her piteously,  
Then with a groan his lingering feet did force  
To leave the spot whence he her eyes could see;  
And, changed like one who knows his time must be  
But short and bitter, without any word  
He knelt before the bearer of the sword;

Then high rose up the gleaming deadly blade,  
Bared of its flowers, and through the crowded place  
Was silence now, and midst of it the maid  
Went by the poor wretch at a gentle pace,  
And he to hers upturned his sad white face;  
Nor did his eyes behold another sight  
Ere on his soul there fell eternal night.

So was the pageant ended, and all folk  
Talking of this and that familiar thing  
In little groups from that sad concourse broke,



For now the shrill bats were upon the wing,  
And soon dark night would slay the evening,  
And in dark gardens sang the nightingale  
Her little-heeded, oft-repeated tale.

And with the last of all the hunter went,  
Who, wondering at the strange sight he had seen,  
Prayed an old man to tell him what it meant,  
Both why the vanquished man so slain had been,  
And if the maiden were an earthly queen,  
Or rather what much more she seemed to be,  
No sharer in the world's mortality.

'Stranger,' said he, 'I pray she soon may die  
Whose lovely youth has slain so many an one!  
King Schœneus' daughter is she verily,  
Who when her eyes first looked upon the sun  
Was fain to end her life but new begun,  
For he had vowed to leave but men alone  
Sprung from his loins when he from earth was gone.

'Therefore he bade one leave her in the wood,  
And let wild things deal with her as they might,  
But this being done, some cruel god thought good  
To save her beauty in the world's despite:  
Folk say that her, so delicate and white  
As now she is, a rough root-grubbing bear  
Amidst her shapeless cubs at first did rear.

'In course of time the woodfolk slew her nurse,  
And to their rude abode the youngling brought,  
And reared her up to be a kingdom's curse;  
Who grown a woman, of no kingdom thought,  
But armed and swift, 'mid beasts destruction  
wrought,  
Nor spared two shaggy centaur kings to slay  
To whom her body seemed an easy prey.'

‘So to this city, led by fate, she came  
Whom known by signs, whereof I cannot tell,  
King Schoeneus for his child at last did claim,  
Nor otherwhere since that day doth she dwell  
Sending too many a noble soul to hell—  
What! thine eyes glisten! what then, thinkest thou  
Her shining head unto the yoke to bow?

‘Listen, my son, and love some other maid  
For she the saffron gown will never wear,  
And on no flower-strewn couch shall she be laid,  
Nor shall her voice make glad a lover’s ear:  
Yet if of Death thou hast not any fear,  
Yea, rather, if thou lov’st him utterly,  
Thou still may’st woo her ere thou com’st to die,

‘Like him that on this day thou sawest lie dead;  
For, fearing as I deem the sea-born one,  
The maid has vowed e’en such a man to wed  
As in the course her swift feet can outrun,  
But whoso fails herein, his days are done:  
He came the nighest that was slain to-day,  
Although with him I deem she did but play.

‘Behold, such mercy Atalanta gives  
To those that long to win her loveliness;  
Be wise! be sure that many a maid there lives  
Gentler than she, of beauty little less,  
Whose swimming eyes thy loving words shall bless,  
When in some garden, knee set close to knee,  
Thou sing’st the song that love may teach to thee.’

So to the hunter spake that ancient man,  
And left him for his own home presently:  
But he turned round, and through the moonlight  
wan

Reached the thick wood, and there 'twixt tree and  
tree

Distraught he passed the long night feverishly,  
'Twixt sleep and waking, and at dawn arose  
To wage hot war against his speechless foes.

There to the hart's flank seemed his shaft to grow,  
As panting down the broad green glades he flew,  
There by his horn the Dryads well might know  
His thrust against the bear's heart had been true,  
And there Adonis' bane his javelin slew,  
But still in vain through rough and smooth he went,  
For none the more his restlessness was spent.

So wandering, he to Argive cities came,  
And in the lists with valiant men he stood,  
And by great deeds he won him praise and fame,  
And heaps of wealth for little-valued blood:  
But none of all these things, or life, seemed good  
Unto his heart, where still unsatisfied  
A ravenous longing warred with fear and pride.

Therefore it happened when but a month had gone  
Since he had left King Schoeneus' city old,  
In hunting-gear again, again alone  
The forest-bordered meads did he behold.  
Where still mid thoughts of August's quivering gold  
Folk hoed the wheat, and clipped the vine in trust  
Of faint October's purple-foaming must.

And once again he passed the peaceful gate,  
While to his beating heart his lips did lie,  
That owning not victorious love and fate,  
Said, half aloud, 'And here too must I try,  
To win of alien men the mastery,  
And gather for my head fresh meed of fame  
And cast new glory on my father's name.'

In spite of that, how beat his heart, when first  
Folk said to him, 'And art thou come to see  
That which still makes our city's name accurst  
Among all mothers for its cruelty?  
Then know indeed that fate is good to thee  
Because to-morrow a new luckless one  
Against the whitefoot maid is pledged to run.'

So on the morrow with no curious eyes  
As once he did, that piteous sight he saw,  
Nor did that wonder in his heart arise  
As toward the goal the conquering maid 'gan  
draw,  
Nor did he gaze upon her eyes with awe,  
Too full the pain of longing filled his heart  
For fear or wonder there to have a part.

But O, how long the night was ere it went!  
How long it was before the dawn begun  
Showed to the wakening birds the sun's intent  
That not in darkness should the world be done!  
And then, and then, how long before the sun  
Bade silently the toilers of the earth  
Get forth to fruitless cares or empty mirth!

And long it seemed that in the market-place  
He stood and saw the chaffering folk go by,  
Ere from the ivory throne King Schoeneus' face  
Looked down upon the murmur royally,  
But then came trembling that the time was nigh  
When he midst pitying looks his love must claim,  
And jeering voices must salute his name.

But as the throng he pierced to gain the throne,  
His alien face distraught and anxious told  
What hopeless errand he was bound upon,

And, each to each, folk whispered to behold  
His godlike limbs; nay, and one woman old  
As he went by must pluck him by the sleeve  
And pray him yet that wretched love to leave.

For sidling up she said, 'Canst thou live twice,  
Fair son? canst thou have joyful youth again,  
That thus thou goest to the sacrifice  
Thyself the victim? nay then, all in vain  
Thy mother bore her longing and her pain,  
And one more maiden on the earth must dwell  
Hopeless of joy, nor fearing death and hell.

'O, fool, thou knowest not the compact then  
That with the threeformed goddess she has made  
To keep her from the loving lips of men,  
And in no saffron gown to be arrayed,  
And therewithal with glory to be paid,  
And love of her the moonlit river sees  
White 'gainst the shadow of the formless trees.

'Come back, and I myself will pray for thee  
Unto the sea-born framer of delights,  
To give thee her who on the earth may be  
The fairest stirrer up to death and fights,  
To quench with hopeful days and joyous nights  
The flame that doth thy youthful heart consume.  
Come back, nor give thy beauty to the tomb.'

How should he listen to her earnest speech?  
Words, such as he not once or twice had said  
Unto himself, whose meaning scarce could reach  
The firm abode of that sad hardihead—  
He turned about, and through the marketstead  
Swiftly he passed, until before the throne  
In the cleared space he stood at last alone.

Then said the King, 'Stranger, what dost thou here ?

Have any of my folk done ill to thee ?

Or art thou of the forest men in fear ?

Or art thou of the sad fraternity

Who still will strive my daughter's mates to be,

Staking their lives to win to earthly bliss

The lonely maid, the friend of Artemis ?'

'O King,' he said, 'thou sayest the word indeed;

Nor will I quit the strife till I have won

My sweet delight, or death to end my need.

And know that I am called Milanion,

Of King Amphidamas the well-loved son:

So fear not that to thy old name, O King,

Much loss or shame my victory will bring.'

'Nay, Prince,' said Schœneus, 'welcome to this land

Thou wert indeed, if thou wert here to try

Thy strength 'gainst some one mighty of his hand;

Nor would we grudge thee well-won mastery.

But now, why wilt thou come to me to die,

And at my door lay down thy luckless head,

Swelling the band of the unhappy dead,

'Whose curses even now my heart doth fear ?

Lo, I am old, and know what life can be,

And what a bitter thing is death anear.

O Son! be wise, and hearken unto me,

And if no other can be dear to thee,

At least as now, yet is the world full wide,

And bliss in seeming hopeless hearts may hide:

'But if thou lovest life, then all is lost,'

'Nay, King,' Milanion said, 'thy words are vain.

Doubt not that I have counted well the cost.

But say, on what day wilt thou that I gain  
Fulfilled delight, or death to end my pain?  
Right glad were I if it could be to-day,  
And all my doubts at rest for ever lay.'

'Nay,' said King Schoeneus, 'thus it shall not be,  
But rather shalt thou let a month go by,  
And weary with thy prayers for victory  
What god thou know'st the kindest and most nigh.  
So doing, still perchance thou shalt not die:  
And with my goodwill wouldst thou have the maid,  
For of the equal gods I grow afraid.

'And until then, O Prince, be thou my guest,  
And all these troublous things awhile forget.'

'Nay,' said he, 'couldst thou give my soul good  
rest,  
And on mine head a sleepy garland set,  
Then had I 'scaped the meshes of the net,  
Nor shouldst thou hear from me another word;  
But now, make sharp thy fearful heading-sword.

'Yet will I do what son of man may do,  
And promise all the gods may most desire,  
That to myself I may at least be true;  
And on that day my heart and limbs so tire,  
With utmost strain and measureless desire,  
That, at the worst, I may but fall asleep  
When in the sunlight round that sword shall sweep.'

He went therewith, nor anywhere would bide,  
But unto Argos restlessly did wend;  
And there, as one who lays all hope aside,  
Because the leech has said his life must end,  
Silent farewell he bade to foe and friend,  
And took his way unto the restless sea,  
For there he deemed his rest and help might be.



Upon the shore of Argolis there stands  
A temple to the goddess that he sought,  
That, turned unto the lion-bearing lands,  
Fenced from the east, of cold winds hath no thought,  
Though to no homestead there the sheaves are  
brought,  
No groaning press torments the close-clipped murk,  
Lonely the fane stands, far from all men's work.

Pass through a close, set thick with myrtle-trees.  
Through the brass doors that guard the holy place,  
And entering, hear the washing of the seas  
That twice a-day rise high above the base,  
And with the south-west urging them, embrace  
The marble feet of her that standeth there  
That shrink not, naked though they be and fair.

Small is the fane through which the seawind sings  
About Queen Venus' well-wrought image white,  
But hung around are many precious things,  
The gifts of those who, longing for delight,  
Have hung them there within the goddess' sight,  
And in return have taken at her hands  
The living treasures of the Grecian lands.

And thither now has come Milanion,  
And showed unto the priests' wide open eyes  
Gifts fairer than all those that there have shone,  
Silk cloths, inwrought with Indian fantasies,  
And bowls inscribed with sayings of the wise  
Above the deeds of foolish living things;  
And mirrors fit to be the gifts of kings.

And now before the Sea-born One he stands,  
By the sweet veiling smoke made dim and soft,  
And while the incense trickles from his hands,



And while the odorous smoke-wreaths hang aloft,  
Thus doth he pray to her: 'O Thou, who oft  
Hast holpen man and maid in their distress  
Despise me not for this my wretchedness!

'O goddess, among us who dwell below,  
Kings and great men, great for a little while,  
Have pity on the lowly heads that bow,  
Nor hate the hearts that love them without guile;  
Wilt thou be worse than these, and is thy smile  
A vain device of him who set thee here,  
An empty dream of some artificer?

'Oh, great one, some men love, and are ashamed;  
Some men are weary of the bonds of love;  
Yea, and by some men lightly art thou blamed,  
That from thy toils their lives they cannot move,  
And 'mid the ranks of men their manhood prove.  
Alas! O goddess, if thou slayest me  
What new immortal can I serve but thee?

'Think then, will it bring honour to thy head  
If folk say, "Everything aside he cast  
And to all fame and honour was he dead,  
And to his one hope now is dead at last,  
Since all unholpen he is gone and past:  
Ah, the Gods love not man, for certainly  
He to his helper did not cease to cry."

'Nay, but thou wilt help; they who died before  
Not single-hearted as I deem came here,  
Therefore unthanked they laid their gifts before  
Thy stainless feet, still shivering with their fear,  
Lest in their eyes their true thought might appear,  
Who sought to be the lords of that fair town,  
Dreaded of men and winners of renown.

'O Queen, thou knowest I pray not for this:  
O set us down together in some place  
Where not a voice can break our heaven of bliss,  
Where nought but rocks and I can see her face,  
Softening beneath the marvel of thy grace,  
Where not a foot our vanished steps can track—  
The golden age, the golden age come back!

'O fairest, hear me now who do thy will,  
Plead for thy rebel that she be not slain,  
But live and love and be thy servant still;  
Ah, give her joy and take away my pain,  
And thus two long-enduring servants gain.  
An easy thing this is to do for me;  
What need of my vain words to weary thee?

'But none the less, this place will I not leave  
Until I needs must go my death to meet,  
Or at thy hands some happy sign receive  
That in great joy we twain may one day greet  
Thy presence here and kiss thy silver feet,  
Such as we deem thee, fair beyond all words,  
Victorious o'er our servants and our lords.'

Then from the altar back a space he drew,  
But from the Queen turned not his face away,  
But 'gainst a pillar leaned, until the blue  
That arched the sky, at ending of the day,  
Was turned to ruddy gold and changing grey,  
And clear, but low, the nigh-ebbed windless sea  
In the still evening murmured ceaselessly.

And there he stood when all the sun was down,  
Nor had he moved, when the dim golden light,  
Like the far lustre of a godlike town,  
Had left the world to seeming hopeless night,  
Nor would he move the more when wan moonlight

Streamed through the pillars for a little while,  
And lighted up the white Queen's changeless smile.

Nought noted he the shallow-flowing sea  
As step by step it set the wrack a-swim;  
The yellow torchlight nothing noted he  
Wherein with fluttering gown and half-bared limb  
The temple damsels sung their midnight hymn;  
And nought the doubled stillness of the fane  
When they were gone and all was hushed again.

But when the waves had touched the marble base,  
And steps the fish swim over twice a-day,  
The dawn beheld him sunken in his place  
Upon the floor; and sleeping there he lay,  
Not heeding aught the little jets of spray  
The roughened sea brought nigh, across him cast,  
For as one dead all thought from him had passed.

Yet long before the sun had showed his head,  
Long ere the varied hangings on the wall  
Had gained once more their blue and green and red,  
He rose as one some well-known sign doth call  
When war upon the city's gates doth fall,  
And scarce like one fresh risen out of sleep,  
He 'gan again his broken watch to keep.

Then he turned round; not for the sea-gull's cry  
That wheeled above the temple in his flight,  
Not for the fresh south wind that lovingly  
Breathed on the new-born day and dying night,  
But some strange hope 'twixt fear and great delight  
Drew round his face, now flushed, now pale and  
wan,  
And still constrained his eyes the sea to scan.

Now a faint light lit up the southern sky,  
Not sun or moon, for all the world was grey,  
But this a bright cloud seemed, that drew anigh,  
Lighting the dull waves that beneath it lay  
As toward the temple still it took its way,  
And still grew greater, till Milanion  
Saw nought for dazzling light that round him  
shone.

But as he staggered with his arms outspread,  
Delicious unnamed odours breathed around,  
For languid happiness he bowed his head,  
And with wet eyes sank down upon the ground,  
Nor wished for aught, nor any dream he found  
To give him reason for that happiness—  
Or make him ask more knowledge of his bliss.

At last his eyes were cleared, and he could see  
Through happy tears the goddess face to face  
With that faint image of Divinity,  
Whose well-wrought smile and dainty changeless  
grace  
Until that morn so gladdened all the place;  
Then he, unwitting, cried aloud her name  
And covered up his eyes for fear and shame.

But through the stillness he her voice could hear  
Piercing his heart with joy scarce bearable,  
That said 'Milanion, wherefore dost thou fear?  
I am not hard to those who love me well;  
List to what I a second time will tell.  
And thou mayest hear perchance, and live to save  
The cruel maiden from a loveless grave.

'See, by my feet three golden apples lie—  
Such fruit among the heavy roses falls,  
Such fruit my watchful damsels carefully

Store up within the best loved of my walls,  
Ancient Damascus, where the lover calls  
Above my unseen head, and faint and light  
The rose-leaves flutter round me in the night.

‘And note, that these are not alone most fair  
With heavenly gold, but longing strange they bring  
Unto the hearts of men, who will not care  
Beholding these, for any once-loved thing  
Till round the shining sides their fingers cling.  
And thou shalt see thy well-girt swiftfoot maid  
By sight of these amidst her glory stayed.

‘For bearing these within a scrip with thee,  
When first she heads thee from the starting-place  
Cast down the first one for her eyes to see,  
And when she turns aside make on apace,  
And if again she heads thee in the race  
Spare not the other two to cast aside  
If she not long enough behind will bide.

‘Farewell, and when has come the happy time  
That she Diana’s raiment must unbind  
And all the world seems blessed with Saturn’s clime,  
And thou with eager arms about her twined  
Beholdest first her grey eyes growing kind,  
Surely, O trembler, thou shalt scarcely then  
Forget the Helper of unhappy men.’

Milanion raised his head at this last word  
For now so soft and kind she seemed to be  
No longer of her Godhead was he feared;  
Too late he looked; for nothing could he see  
But the white image glimmering doubtfully  
In the departing twilight cold and grey,  
And those three apples on the steps that lay.

These then he caught up quivering with delight,  
Yet fearful lest it all might be a dream ;  
And though aweary with the watchful night,  
And sleepless nights of longing, still did deem  
He could not sleep ; but yet the first sunbeam  
That smote the fane across the heaving deep  
Shone on him laid in calm untroubled sleep.

But little ere the noontide did he rise,  
And why he felt so happy scarce could tell  
Until the gleaming apples met his eyes.  
Then leaving the fair place where this befell  
Oft he looked back as one who loved it well,  
Then homeward to the haunts of men 'gan wend  
To bring all things unto a happy end.

Now has the lingering month at last gone by,  
Again are all folk round the running place,  
Nor other seems the dismal pageantry  
Than heretofore, but that another face  
Looks o'er the smooth course ready for the race,  
For now, beheld of all, Milanion  
Stands on the spot he twice has looked upon.

But yet—what change is this that holds the maid ?  
Does she indeed see in his glittering eye  
More than disdain of the sharp shearing blade  
Some happy hope of help and victory ?  
The others seemed to say, ' We come to die,  
Look down upon us for a little while,  
That dead, we may bethink us of thy smile.'

But he—what look of mastery was this  
He cast on her ? why were his lips so red ?  
Why was his face so flushed with happiness ?



So looks not one who deems himself but dead,  
E'en if to death he bows a willing head ;  
So rather looks a god well pleased to find  
Some earthly damsel fashioned to his mind.

Why must she drop her lids before his gaze,  
And even as she casts adown her eyes  
Redden to note his eager glance of praise,  
And wish that she were clad in other guise ?  
Why must the memory to her heart arise  
Of things unnoticed when they first were heard,  
Some lover's song, some answering maiden's word ?

What makes these longings, vague, without a  
name,  
And this vain pity never felt before,  
This sudden languor, this contempt of fame,  
This tender sorrow for the time past o'er,  
These doubts that grow each minute more and  
more ?

Why does she tremble as the time grows near,  
And weak defeat and woeful victory fear ?

Now while she seemed to hear her beating heart,  
Above their heads the trumpet blast rang out  
And forth they sprang ; and she must play her part.  
Then flew her white feet, knowing not a doubt,  
Though slackening once, she turned her head about,  
But then she cried aloud and faster fled  
Than e'er before, and all men deemed him dead.

But with no sound he raised aloft his hand,  
And thence what seemed a ray of light there flew  
And past the maid rolled on along the sand ;  
Then trembling she her feet together drew  
And in her heart a strong desire there grew

To have the toy; some god she thought had given  
That gift to her, to make of earth a heaven.

Then from the course with eager steps she ran,  
And on her odorous bosom laid the gold.  
But when she turned again, the great-limbed man  
Now well ahead she failed not to behold,  
And mindful of her glory waxing cold,  
Sprang up and followed him in hot pursuit,  
Though with one hand she touched the golden fruit.

Note too, the bow that she was wont to bear  
She laid aside to grasp the glittering prize,  
And o'er her shoulder from the quiver fair  
Three arrows fell and lay before her eyes  
Unnoticed as amidst the people's cries  
She sprang to head the strong Milanion,  
Who now the turning-post had well-nigh won.

But as he set his mighty hand on it  
White fingers underneath his own were laid,  
And white limbs from his dazzled eyes did flit,  
Then he the second fruit cast by the maid;  
She ran awhile, and then as one afraid  
Wavered and stopped, and turned and made no  
    stay,  
Until the globe with its bright fellow lay.

Then, as a troubled glance she cast around  
Now far ahead the Argive could she see,  
And in her garment's hem one hand she wound  
To keep the double prize, and strenuously  
Sped o'er the course, and little doubt had she  
To win the day, though now but scanty space  
Was left betwixt him and the winning place.



Short was the way unto such winged feet,  
Quickly she gained upon him till at last  
He turned about her eager eyes to meet  
And from his hand the third fair apple cast.  
She wavered not, but turned and ran so fast  
After the prize that should her bliss fulfil,  
That in her hand it lay ere it was still.

Nor did she rest, but turned about to win  
Once more, an unblest woeful victory—  
And yet—and yet—why does her breath begin  
To fail her, and her feet drag heavily?  
Why fails she now to see if far or nigh  
The goal is? why do her grey eyes grow dim?  
Why do these tremors run through every limb?

She spreads her arms abroad some stay to find  
Else must she fall, indeed, and findeth this,  
A strong man's arms about her body twined.  
Nor may she shudder now to feel his kiss,  
So wrapped she is in new unbroken bliss:  
Made happy that the foe the prize hath won,  
She weeps glad tears for all her glory done.

Shatter the trumpet, hew adown the posts!  
Upon the brazen altar break the sword,  
And scatter incense to appease the ghosts  
Of those who died here by their own award.  
Bring forth the image of the mighty Lord,  
And her who unseen o'er the runners hung,  
And did a deed for ever to be sung.

Here are the gathered folk; make no delay,  
Open King Schoeneus' well-filled treasury,  
Bring out the gifts long hid from light of day,  
The golden bowls o'erwrought with imagery,

Gold chains, and unguents brought from over sea,  
The saffron gown the old Phœnician brought,  
Within the temple of the Goddess wrought.

O ye, O damsels, who shall never see  
Her, that Love's servant bringeth now to you,  
Returning from another victory,  
In some cool bower do all that now is due!  
Since she in token of her service new  
Shall give to Venus offerings rich enow,  
Her maiden zone, her arrows, and her bow.

## (2) THE PROUD KING.

### ARGUMENT.

A certain king, blinded by pride, thought that he was something more than man, if not equal to God; but such a judgment fell on him that none knew him for king, and he suffered many things, till in the end, humbling himself, he regained his kingdom and honour.

IN a far country that I cannot name,  
And on a year long ages past away,  
A King there dwelt, in rest and ease and fame,  
And richer than the Emperor is to-day:  
The very thought of what this man might say,  
From dusk to dawn kept many a lord awake,  
For fear of him did many a great man quake.

Young was he when he first sat on the throne,  
And he was wedded to a noble wife,  
But at the daïs must he sit alone,  
Nor durst a man speak to him for his life  
Except with leave: nought knew he change or strife,  
But that the years passed silently away,  
And in his black beard gathered specks of grey.

Now so it chanced, upon a May morning,  
Wakeful he lay when yet low was the sun,  
Looking distraught at many a royal thing,  
And counting up his titles one by one,  
And thinking much of things that he had done;  
For full of life he felt, and hale and strong,  
And knew that none durst say when he did wrong.

For no man now could give him dread or doubt,  
The land was 'neath his sceptre far and wide,  
And at his beck would well-armed myriads shout.  
Then swelled his vain, unthinking heart with pride,  
Until at last he raised him up and cried,  
'What need have I for temple or for priest?  
Am I not God, whiles that I live at least?'

And yet withal that dead his fathers were,  
He needs must think, that quick the years pass by;  
But he, who seldom yet had seen death near  
Or heard his name, said, 'Still I may not die  
Though underneath the earth my fathers lie;  
My sire indeed was called a mighty king,  
Yet in regard of mine, a little thing

'His kingdom was; moreover his grandsire  
To him was but a prince of narrow lands,  
Whose father, though to things he did aspire  
Beyond most men, a great knight of his hands,  
Yet ruled some little town where now there stands  
The kennel of my dogs; then may not I  
Rise higher yet, nor like poor wretches die?

'Since up the ladder ever we have gone  
Step after step nor fallen back again;  
And there are tales of people who have won  
A life enduring, without care or pain,  
Or any man to make their wishes vain;

Perchance this prize unwitting now I hold;  
For times change fast, the world is waxen old.'

So mid these thoughts once more he fell asleep,  
And when he woke again, high was the sun,  
Then quickly from his gold bed did he leap,  
And of his former thoughts remembered none,  
But said, 'To-day through green woods will we run,  
Nor shall to-day be worse than yesterday,  
But better it may be, for game and play.'

So for the hunt was he apparelled,  
And forth he rode with heart right well at ease;  
And many a strong, deep-chested hound they led,  
Over the dewy grass betwixt the trees,  
And fair white horses fit for the white knees  
Of Her the ancients fabled rides a-nights  
Betwixt the setting and the rising lights.

Now following up a mighty hart and swift  
The King rode long upon that morning tide,  
And since his horse was worth a kingdom's gift,  
It chanced him all his servants to outride,  
Until unto a shaded river-side  
He came alone at hottest of the sun,  
When all the freshness of the day was done.

Dismounting there, and seeing so far a-down  
The red-finned fishes o'er the gravel play,  
It seemed that moment worth his royal crown  
To hide there from the burning of the day,  
Wherefore he did off all his rich array,  
And tied his horse unto a neighbouring tree,  
And in the water sported leisurely.

But when he was fulfilled of this delight  
He gat him to the bank well satisfied,  
And thought to do on him his raiment bright

And homeward to his royal house to ride;  
But 'mazed and angry, looking far and wide  
Nought saw he of his horse and rich attire,  
And 'gainst the thief 'gan threaten vengeance dire.

But little help his fury was to him,  
So lustily he 'gan to shout and cry,  
None answered; still the lazy chub did swim  
By inches 'gainst the stream; away did fly  
The small pied bird, but nathless stayed anigh,  
And o'er the stream still plied his fluttering trade,  
Of such a helpless man not much afraid.

Weary of crying in that lonely place  
He ceased 'at last, and thinking what to do,  
E'en as he was, up stream he set his face,  
Since not far off a certain house he knew  
Where dwelt his ranger, a lord leal and true,  
Who many a bounty at his hands had had,  
And now to do him ease would be right glad.

Thither he hastened on, and as he went  
The hot sun sorely burned his naked skin,  
The whiles he thought, 'When he to me has lent  
Fine raiment, and at ease I sit within  
His coolest chamber clad in linen thin,  
And drinking wine, the best that he has got,  
I shall forget this troublous day and hot.'

Now note, that while he thus was on his way,  
And still his people for their master sought,  
There met them one who in the King's array  
Bestrode his very horse, and as they thought  
Was none but he in good time to them brought,  
Therefore they hailed him King, and so all rode  
From out the forest to his fair abode.

And there in royal guise he sat at meat,  
Served, as his wont was, 'neath the canopy,  
And there the hounds fawned round about his feet,  
And there that city's elders did he see,  
And with his lords took counsel what should be;  
And there at supper when the day waxed dim  
The Queen within his chamber greeted him.

Leave we him there; for to the ranger's gate  
The other came, and on the horn he blew,  
Till peered the wary porter through the grate  
To see if he, perchance, the blower knew,  
Before he should the wicket-gate undo;  
But when he saw him standing there, he cried,  
'What dost thou, friend, to show us all thine hide?

'We list not buy to-day or flesh or fell;  
Go home and get thyself a shirt at least,  
If thou wouldst aught, for saith our vicar well,  
That God hath given clothes e'en to the beast.'  
Therewith he turned to go, but as he ceased  
The King cried out, 'Open, O foolish man!  
I am thy lord and King, Jovinian;

'Go now, and tell thy master I am here  
Desiring food and clothes, and in this plight,  
And then hereafter need'st thou have no fear,  
Because thou didst not know me at first sight.'  
'Yea, yea, I am but dreaming in the night,'  
The carle said, 'and I bid thee, friend, to dream,  
. Come through! here is no gate, it doth but seem.'

With that his visage vanished from the grate;  
But when the King now found himself alone,  
He hurled himself against the mighty gate,



And beat upon it madly with a stone,  
Half wondering midst his rage, how any one  
Could live, if longed-for things he chanced to lack;  
But midst all this, at last the gate flew back,

And there the porter stood, brown-bill in hand,  
And said, 'Ah, fool, thou makest this ado,  
Wishing before my lord's high seat to stand;  
Thou shalt be gladder soon hereby to go,  
Or surely nought of handy blows I know.  
Come, willy nilly, thou shalt tell this tale  
Unto my lord, if aught it may avail.'

With that his staff he handled, as if he  
Would smite the King, and said, 'Get on before!  
St. Mary! now thou goest full leisurely,  
Who, erewhile, fain wouldst batter down the door.  
See now, if ere this matter is passed o'er,  
I come to harm, yet thou shalt not escape,  
Thy back is broad enow to pay thy jape.'

Half blind with rage the King before him passed,  
But nought of all he doomed him to durst say,  
Lest he from rest nigh won should yet be cast,  
So with a swelling heart he took his way,  
Thinking right soon his shame to cast away,  
And the carle followed still, ill satisfied  
With such a wretched losel to abide.

Fair was the ranger's house and new and white,  
And by the King built scarce a year ago,  
And carved about for this same lord's delight  
With woodland stories deftly wrought in stone;  
There oft the King was wont to come alone,  
For much he loved this lord, who erst had been  
A landless squire, a servant of the Queen.

Now long a lord and clad in rich attire,  
In his fair hall he sat before the wine  
Watching the evening sun's yet burning fire,  
Through the close branches of his pleasance shine,  
In mood of him who deems himself divine,  
Remembering not whereto we all must come,  
Not thinking aught but of his happy home.

From just outside loud mocking merriment  
He heard midst this; and therewithal a squire  
Came hurrying up, his laughter scarcely spent,  
Who said, 'My lord, a man in such attire  
As Adam's, ere he took the devil's hire,  
Who saith that thou wilt know him for the King,  
Up from the gate John Porter needs must bring.

'He to the King is nothing like in aught  
But that his beard he weareth in such guise  
As doth my lord: wilt thou that he be brought?  
Perchance some treason 'neath his madness lies.'  
'Yea,' saith the ranger, 'that may well be wise,  
But haste, for now am I right well at ease,  
Nor would be wearied with such folk as these.'

Then went the squire, and coming back again,  
The porter and the naked King brought in,  
Who thinking now that this should end his pain,  
Forgat his fury and the porter's sin,  
And said, 'Thou wonderest how I came to win  
This raiment, that kings long have ceased to wear,  
Since Noah's flood has altered all the air?

'Well, thou shalt know; but first I pray thee,  
Hugh,  
Reach me that cloak that lieth on the board,  
For certes, though thy folk are leal and true,



It seemeth that they deem a mighty lord  
Is made by crown, and silken robe, and sword;  
Lo, such are borel folk; but thou and I  
Fail not to know the signs of majesty.

‘Thou risest not! thou lookest strange on me!  
Ah, what is this? Who reigneth in my stead?  
How long hast thou been plotting secretly?  
Then slay me now, for if I be not dead  
Armies will rise up when I nod my head.  
Slay me!—or cast thy treachery away,  
And have anew my favour from this day.’

‘Why should I tell thee that thou ne’er wast  
king?’

The ranger said, ‘thou knowest not my mind.  
Poor man, I pray God help thee in this thing;  
And, ere thou diest, send thee days more kind;  
And help from us a-going shalt thou find.  
Good fellows, this poor creature is but mad,  
Take him, and in a coat let him be clad;

‘And give him meat and drink, and on this night  
Beneath some roof of ours let him abide,  
For some day God may set his folly right.’  
Then spread the King his arms abroad and cried,  
‘Woe to thy food, thy house, and thee betide,  
Thou loathsome traitor! Get ye from the hall,  
Lest smitten by God’s hand this roof should fall;

‘Yea, if the world be but an idle dream,  
And God deals nought with it, yet shall ye see  
Red flame from out these carven windows stream.  
I, I, will burn this vile place utterly,  
And strewn with salt the poisonous earth shall be,  
That such a wretch of such a man has made,  
That so such Judases may grow afraid.’

Thus raving, those who held him he shook off  
And rushed from out the hall, nigh mad indeed,  
And gained the gate, not heeding blow or scoff,  
Nor longer of his nakedness took heed,  
But ran, he knew not where, at headlong speed  
Till, when at last his strength was fully spent,  
Worn out, he fell beneath a woody bent.

But for the ranger, left alone in peace,  
He bade his folk bring in the minstrelsy;  
And thinking of his life, and fair increase  
Of all his goods, a happy man was he,  
And towards his master felt right lovingly,  
And said, 'This luckless madman will avail  
When next I see the King for one more tale.'

Meanwhile Jovinian by the roadside lay,  
Panting, confused, scarce knowing if he dreamed,  
Until at last, when vanished was the day,  
Through the dark night far off a bright light  
gleamed;  
Which growing quickly, down the road there  
streamed  
The glare of torches, held by men who ran  
Before the litter of a mighty man.

These mixed with soldiers soon the road did  
fill,  
And on their harness could the King behold  
The badge of one erst wont to do his will,  
A counsellor, a gatherer-up of gold,  
Who underneath his rule had now grown old:  
Then wrath and bitterness so filled his heart,  
That from his wretched lair he needs must start.

And o'er the clatter shrilly did he cry,  
'Well met, Duke Peter! ever art thou wise;  
Surely thou wilt not let a day go by  
Ere thou art good friends with mine enemies;  
O fit to rule within a land of lies,  
Go on thy journey, make thyself more meet  
To sit in hell beneath the devil's feet!'

But as he ceased a soldier drew anear,  
And smote him flatling with his sheathéd sword,  
And said, 'Speak louder, that my lord may hear  
And give thee wages for thy ribald word!  
Come forth, for I must show thee to my lord,  
For he may think thee more than mad indeed,  
Who of men's ways has taken wondrous heed.'

Now was the litter stayed midmost the road,  
And round about, the torches in a ring  
Were gathered, and their flickering light now  
glowed  
In gold and gems and many a lordly thing,  
And showed that face well known unto the King,  
That, smiling yesterday, right humble words  
Had spoken midst the concourse of the lords.

But now he said, 'Man, thou wert cursing me  
If these folk heard aright; what wilt thou then,  
Deem'st thou that I have done some wrong to thee,  
Or hast thou scathe from any of my men?  
In any case tell all thy tale again  
When on the judgment-seat thou see'st me sit,  
And I will give no careless ear to it.'

'The night is dark, and in the summer wind  
The torches flicker; canst thou see my face?  
Bid them draw nigher yet, and call to mind

Who gave thee all thy riches and thy place—  
—Well;—if thou canst, deny me, with such grace  
As by the fire-light Peter swore of old,  
When in that Maundy-week the night was cold—

‘—Alas! canst thou not see I am the King?’  
So spoke he, as their eyes met midst the blaze,  
And the King saw the dread foreshadowing  
Within the elder’s proud and stony gaze,  
Of what those lips, thin with the lapse of days,  
Should utter now; nor better it befell;—  
‘Friend, a strange story thou art pleased to tell;

‘Thy luck it is thou tellest it to me,  
Who deem thee mad and let thee go thy way:  
The King is not a man to pity thee,  
Or on thy folly thy fool’s tale to lay:  
Poor fool! take this, and with the light of day,  
Buy food and raiment of some labouring clown,  
And by my counsel keep thee from the town;

‘For fear thy madness break out in some place  
Where folk thy body to the judge must hale,  
And then indeed wert thou in evil case—  
Press on, sirs! or the time will not avail.’  
—There stood the King, with limbs that ’gan to  
fail,

Speechless, and holding in his trembling hand  
A coin new stamped for people of the land;

Thereon, with sceptre, crown, and royal robe,  
The image of a King, himself, was wrought;  
His jewelled feet upon a quartered globe,  
As though by him all men were vain and nought.  
One moment the red glare the silver caught,  
As the lord ceased, the next his hurrying folk  
The flaring circle round the litter broke.

The next, their shadows barred a patch of light,  
Fast vanishing, all else around was black;  
And the poor wretch, left lonely with the night,  
Muttered, 'I wish the day would ne'er come back,  
If all that once I had I now must lack:  
Ah God! how long is it since I was King,  
Nor lacked enough to wish for anything?'

Then down the lonely road he wandered yet,  
Following the vanished lights, he scarce knew why,  
Till he began his sorrows to forget,  
And, steeped in drowsiness, at last drew nigh  
A grassy bank, where, worn with misery,  
He slept the dreamless sleep of weariness,  
That many a time such wretches' eyes will bless.

But at the dawn he woke, nor knew at first  
What ugly chain of grief had brought him there,  
Nor why he felt so wretched and accursed;  
At last remembering, the fresh morning air,  
The rising sun, and all things fresh and fair,  
Yet caused some little hope in him to rise,  
That end might come to these new miseries.

So looking round about, he saw that he  
To his own city gates was come anear;  
Then he arose and going warily,  
And hiding now and then for very fear  
Of folk who bore their goods and country cheer  
Unto the city's market, at the last  
Unto a stone's-throw of the gate he passed.

But when he drew unto the very gate,  
Into the throng of country-folk he came,  
Who for the opening of the door did wait,

Of whom some mocked, and some cried at him  
shame,

And some would know his country and his name ;  
But one into his waggon drew him up,  
And gave him milk from out a beechen cup,

And asked him of his name and misery ;  
Then in his throat a swelling passion rose,  
Which yet he swallowed down, and, 'Friend,' said  
he,

'Last night I had the hap to meet the foes  
Of God and man, who robbed me, and with blows  
Stripped off my weed and left me on the way :  
Thomas the Pilgrim am I called to-day.

'A merchant am I of another town,  
And rich enow to pay thee for thy deed,  
If at the King's door thou wilt set me down,  
For there a squire I know, who at my need  
Will give me food and drink, and fitting weed.  
What is thy name ? in what place dost thou live ?  
That I some day great gifts to thee may give.'

'Fair sir,' the carle said, 'I am poor enow,  
Though certes food I lack not easily ;  
My name is Christopher a-Green ; I sow  
A little orchard set with bush and tree,  
And ever there the kind land keepeth me,  
For I, now fifty, from a little boy  
Have dwelt thereon, and known both grief and joy.

'The house my grandsire built there has grown  
old,  
And certainly a bounteous gift it were  
If thou shouldst give me just enough of gold  
To build it new ; nor shouldst thou lack my prayer  
For such a gift.' 'Nay, friend, have thou no care,'



The King said: 'this is but a little thing  
To me, who oft am richer than the King.'

Now as they talked the gate was opened wide,  
And toward the palace went they through the street  
And Christopher walked ever by the side  
Of his rough wain, where midst the May-flowers  
sweet

Jovinian lay, that folk whom they might meet  
Might see him not to mock at his bare skin:  
So shortly to the King's door did they win.

Then through the open gate Jovinian ran  
Of the first court, and no man stayed him there;  
But as he reached the second gate, a man  
Of the King's household, seeing him all bare  
And bloody, cried out, 'Whither dost thou fare?  
Sure thou art seventy times more mad than mad,  
Or else some magic potion thou hast had,

'Whereby thou fear'st not steel or anything.'  
'But,' said the King, 'good fellow, I know thee;  
And can it be thou knowest not thy King?  
Nay, thou shalt have a good reward of me,  
That thou wouldst rather have than ten years' fee,  
If thou wilt clothe me in fair weed again,  
For now to see my council am I fain.'

'Out, ribald!' quoth the fellow: 'What say'st  
thou?

Thou art my lord, whom God reward and bless?  
Truly before long shalt thou find out how  
John Hangman cureth ill folk's wilfulness;  
Yea, from his scourge the blood has run for less  
Than that which now thou sayest: nay, what say I?  
For lighter words have I seen tall men die.

‘Come now, the sergeants to this thing shall see!’

So to the guard-room was Jovinian brought,  
Where his own soldiers mocked him bitterly,  
And all his desperate words they heeded nought;  
Until at last there came to him this thought,  
That never from this misery should he win,  
But, spite of all his struggles, die therein.

And terrible it seemed, that everything  
So utterly was changed since yesterday,  
That these who were the soldiers of the King,  
Ready to lie down in the common way  
Before him, nor durst rest if he bade play,  
Now stood and mocked him, knowing not the face  
At whose command each man there had his place.

‘Ah, God!’ said he, ‘is this another earth  
From that whereon I stood two days ago?  
Or else in sleep have I had second birth?  
Or among mocking shadows do I go,  
Unchanged myself of flesh and fell, although  
My fair weed I have lost and royal gear?  
And meanwhile all are changed that meet me here;

‘And yet in heart and nowise outwardly.’  
Amid his wretched thoughts two sergeants came,  
Who said, ‘Hold, sirs! because the King would see  
The man who thus so rashly brings him shame,  
By taking his high style and spotless name,  
That never has been questioned ere to-day.  
Come, fool! needs is it thou must go our way.’

So at the sight of him all men turned round,  
As ’twixt these two across the courts he went,  
With downcast head and hands together bound



While from the windows maid and varlet leant,  
And through the morning air fresh laughter sent;  
Until unto the threshold they were come  
Of the great hall within that kingly home.

Therewith right fast Jovinian's heart must beat,  
As now he thought, 'Lo, here shall end the strife;  
For either shall I sit on mine own seat,  
Known unto all, soldier and lord and wife,  
Or else is this the ending of my life,  
And no man henceforth shall remember me,  
And a vain name in records shall I be.'

Therewith he raised his head up, and beheld  
One clad in gold set on his royal throne,  
Gold-crowned, whose hand the ivory sceptre held;  
And underneath him sat the Queen alone,  
Ringed round with standing lords, of whom not one  
Did aught but utmost reverence unto him;  
Then did Jovinian shake in every limb.

Yet midst amaze and rage to him it seemed  
This man was nowise like him in the face;  
But with a marvellous glory his head gleamed,  
As though an angel sat in that high place,  
Where erst he sat like all his royal race,—  
—But their eyes met, and with a stern, calm brow  
The shining one cried out, 'And where art thou?

'Where art thou, robber of my majesty?'  
'Was I not King,' he said, 'but yesterday?  
And though to-day folk give my place to thee,  
I am Jovinian; yes, though none gainsay,  
If on these very stones thou shouldst me slay,  
And though no friend be left for me to moan,  
I am Jovinian still, and King alone.'

Then said that other, 'O thou foolish man,  
King was I yesterday, and long before,  
Nor is my name aught but Jovinian,  
Whom in this house the Queen my mother bore,  
Unto my longing father, for right sore  
Was I desired before I saw the light;  
Thou, fool, art first to speak against my right.

'And surely well thou meritest to die;  
Yet ere I bid men lead thee unto death  
Hearken to these my lords that stand anigh,  
And what this faithful Queen beside me saith;  
Then may'st thou many a year hence draw thy  
    breath,  
If these should stammer in their speech one whit:  
Behold this face, lords, look ye well on it!

'Thou, O fair Queen, say now whose face is this!'   
Then cried they, 'Hail, O Lord Jovinian,  
Long mayst thou live!' and the Queen knelt to kiss  
His gold-shod feet, and through her face there ran  
Sweet colour, as she said, 'Thou art the man  
By whose side I have lain for many a year,  
Thou art my lord Jovinian lief and dear.'

Then said he, 'O thou wretch, hear now and see!  
What thing should hinder me to slay thee now?  
And yet indeed, such mercy is in me,  
If thou wilt kneel down humbly and avow  
Thou art no king, but base-born, as I know  
Thou art indeed, in mine house shalt thou live,  
And as thy service is, so shalt thou thrive.'

But the unhappy King laughed bitterly,  
The red blood rose to flush his visage wan  
Where erst the grey of death began to be;

'Thou liest,' he said, 'I am Jovinian,  
Come of great kings; nor am I such a man  
As still to live when all delight is gone,  
As thou might'st do, who sittest on my throne.'

No answer made the other for a while,  
But sat and gazed upon him steadfastly,  
Until across his face there came a smile,  
Where scorn seemed mingled with some great pity.  
And then he said, 'Nathless thou shalt not die,  
But live on as thou mayst, a lowly man,  
Forgetting thou wast once Jovinian.'

Then wildly round the hall Jovinian gazed,  
Turning about to many a well-known face,  
But none of all his folk seemed grieved or mazed,  
But stood unmoved, each in his wonted place;  
There were the Lords, the Marshal with his mace,  
The Chamberlain, the Captain of the Guard,  
Grey-headed, with his wrinkled face and hard,

That had peered down so many a lane of war;  
There stood the grave ambassadors arow,  
Come from half-conquered lands; without the bar  
The foreign merchants gazed upon the show,  
Willing new things of that great land to know;  
Nor was there any doubt in any man  
That the gold throne still held Jovinian.

Yea, as the sergeants laid their hands on him,  
The mighty hound that crouched before the throne  
Flew at him fain to tear him limb from limb,  
Though in the woods, the brown bear's dying  
groan,

He and that beast had often heard alone.  
'Ah!' muttered he, 'take thou thy wages too,  
Worship the risen sun as these men do.'

They thrust him out, and as he passed the door,  
The murmur of the stately court he heard  
Behind him, and soft footfalls on the floor,  
And, though by this somewhat his skin was seared,  
Hung back, at the rough eager wind afear'd;  
But from the place they dragged him through the  
gate,

Wherethrough he oft had rid in royal state.

Then down the streets they led him, where of old,  
He, coming back from some well-finished war,  
Had seen the line of flashing steel and gold  
Wind upwards 'twixt the houses from the bar,  
While clashed the bells from wreathed spires afar,  
Now moaning, as they haled him on, he said,  
'God and the world against one lonely head!'

But soon, the bar being past, they loosed their hold,  
And said, 'Thus saith by us our Lord the King,  
Dwell now in peace, but yet be not so bold  
To come again, or to thy lies to cling,  
Lest unto thee there fall a worser thing;  
And for ourselves we bid thee ever pray  
For him who has been good to thee this day.'

Therewith they turned away into the town,  
And still he wandered on and knew not where,  
Till, stumbling at the last, he fell adown,  
And looking round beheld a brook right fair,  
That ran in pools and shallows here and there,  
And on the further side of it a wood,  
Nigh which a lowly clay-built hovel stood.

Gazing thereat, it came into his mind  
A priest dwelt there, a hermit wise and old,  
Whom he had ridden oftentimes to find,

In days when first the sceptre he did hold,  
And unto whom his mind he oft had told,  
And had good counsel from him, though indeed  
A scanty crop had sprung from that good seed.

Therefore he passed the brook with heavy cheer  
And toward the little house went speedily,  
And at the door knocked, trembling with his fear,  
Because he thought, 'Will he remember me?  
If not, within me must there surely be  
Some devil, who turns everything to ill,  
And makes my wretched body do his will.'

So, while such doleful things as this he thought,  
There came unto the door the holy man,  
Who said, 'Good friend, what tidings hast thou  
brought?'

'Father,' he said, 'knowest thou Jovinian?  
Know'st thou me not, made naked, poor, and wan?  
Alas, O father! am I not the King,  
The rightful lord of thee and everything?'

'Nay, thou art mad to tell me such a tale!'  
The hermit said; 'if thou seek'st soul's health here,  
Right little will such words as this avail;  
It were a better deed to shrive thee clear,  
And take the pardon Christ has bought so dear,  
Than to an ancient man such mocks to say  
That would be fitter for a Christmas play.'

So to his hut he got him back again,  
And fell the unhappy King upon his knees,  
And unto God at last he did complain,  
Saying, 'Lord God, what bitter things are these?  
What hast thou done, that every man that sees  
This wretched body, of my death is fain?  
O Lord God, give me back myself again!

‘E’en if therewith I needs must die straightway.  
Indeed I know that since upon the earth  
I first did go, I ever day by day  
Have grown the worse, who was of little worth  
E’en at the best time since my helpless birth.  
And yet it pleased thee once to make me King,  
Why hast thou made me now this wretched thing?

‘Why am I hated so of every one?  
Wilt thou not let me live my life again,  
Forgetting all the deeds that I have done,  
Forgetting my old name, and honours vain,  
That I may cast away this lonely pain?  
Yet if thou wilt not, help me in this strife,  
That I may pass my little span of life,

‘Not made a monster by unhappiness.  
What shall I say? thou mad’st me weak of will,  
Thou wrapped’st me in ease and carelessness,  
And yet, as some folk say, thou lovest me still;  
Look down! of folly I have had my fill,  
And am but now as first thou madest me,  
Weak, yielding clay to take impress of thee.’

So said he weeping, and but scarce had done,  
When yet again came forth that hermit old,  
And said, ‘Alas! my master and my son,  
Is this a dream my wearied eyes behold?  
What doleful wonder now shall I be told,  
Of that ill world that I so long have left?  
What thing thy glory from thee has bereft?’

A strange surprise of joy therewith there came  
To that worn heart; he said, ‘For some great sin  
The Lord my God has brought me unto shame;  
I am unknown of servants, wife, and kin,  
Unknown of all the lords that stand within



My father's house ; nor didst thou know me more  
When e'en just now I stood before thy door.

'Now since thou know'st me, surely God is good,  
And will not slay me, and good hope I have  
Of help from Him that died upon the rood,  
And is a mighty lord to slay and save:  
So now again these blind men will I brave,  
If thou wilt give me of thy poorest weed,  
And some rough food, the which I sorely need ;

'Then of my sins thou straight shalt shrive me  
clean.'

Then weeping said the holy man, 'Dear lord,  
What heap of woes upon thine head has been ;  
Enter, O King, take this rough gown and cord,  
And what scant food my hovel can afford ;  
And tell me everything thou hast to say ;  
And then the High God speed thee on thy way.'

So when in coarse serge raiment he was clad,  
He told him all that pride had made him think ;  
And showed him of his life both good and bad ;  
And then being houselled, did he eat and drink,  
While in the wise man's heart his words did sink,  
For, 'God be praised!' he thought, 'I am no king,  
Who scarcely shall do right in anything!'

Then he made ready for the King his ass,  
And bade again, God speed him on the way,  
And down the road the King made haste to pass  
As it was growing toward the end of day,  
With sober joy for troubles passed away ;  
But trembling still, as onward he did ride,  
Meeting few folk upon that eventide.

So to the city gate being come at last,  
He noted there two ancient warders stand,  
Whereof one looked askance as he went past,  
And whispered low behind his held-up hand  
Unto his mate, 'The King! who gave command  
That if disguised this eve he pass this gate,  
No reverence we should do his kingly state.'

Thereat with joy, Jovinian smiled again,  
And so passed onward quickly down the street;  
And well-nigh was he eased of all his pain  
When he beheld the folk that he might meet  
Gaze hard at him, as though they fain would greet  
His well-known face, but durst not, knowing well  
He would not any of his state should tell.

Withal unto the palace being come,  
He lighted down thereby and enteréd,  
And once again it seemed his royal home,  
For folk again before him bowed the head;  
And to him came a squire, who softly said,  
'The Queen awaits thee, O my lord the King,  
Within the little hall where minstrels sing,

'Since there thou bad'st her meet thee on this  
night.'

'Lead on then!' said the King, and in his heart  
He said, 'Perfay all goeth more than right  
And I am King again'; but with a start  
He thought of him who played the kingly part  
That morn, yet said, 'If God will have it so  
This man like all the rest my face will know.'

So in the Little Hall the Queen he found,  
Asleep, as one a spell binds suddenly;  
For her fair broidery lay upon the ground,



And in her lap her open hand did lie,  
The silken-threaded needle close thereby;  
And by her stood that image of the King  
In rich apparel, crown and signet-ring.

But when the King stepped forth with angry eye  
And would have spoken, came a sudden light  
And changéd was that other utterly;  
For he was clad in robe of shining white,  
Inwrought with flowers of unnamed colours bright  
Girt with a marvellous girdle, and whose hem  
Fell to his naked feet and shone in them;

And from his shoulders did two wings arise,  
That with the swaying of his body, played  
This way and that; of strange and lovely dyes  
Their feathers were, and wonderfully made:  
And now he spoke, 'O King, be not dismayed,  
Or think my coming here so strange to be,  
For oft ere this have I been close to thee.

'And now thou knowest in how short a space  
The God that made the world can unmake thee,  
And though He alter in no whit thy face,  
Can make all folk forget thee utterly,  
That thou to-day a nameless wretch mayst be,  
Who yesterday woke up without a peer,  
The wide world's marvel and the people's fear.

'Behold, thou oughtest to thank God for this,  
That on the hither side of thy dark grave  
Thou well hast learned how great a God He is  
Who from the heavens such countless rebels drave,  
Yet turns Himself such folk as thee to save;  
For many a man thinks nought at all of it,  
Till in a darksome land he comes to sit,

‘Lamenting everything: so do not thou!  
For inasmuch as thou thoughtst not to die  
This thing may happen to thee even now,  
Because the day unspeakable draws nigh,  
When bathed in unknown flame all things shall  
lie;

And if thou art upon God’s side that day,  
Unslain, thine earthly part shall pass away.

‘Or if thy body in the grave must rot,  
Well mayst thou see how small a thing is this,  
Whose pain of yesterday now hurts thee not,  
Now thou hast come again to earthly bliss,  
Though bitter-sweet thou knowest well this is,  
And though no coming day can ever see  
Ending of happiness where thou mayst be.

‘Now must I go, nor wilt thou see me more  
Until the day, when, unto thee at least  
This world is gone, and an unmeasured shore,  
Where all is wonderful and changed, thou seest:  
Therefore, farewell! at council and at feast  
Thy nobles shalt thou meet as thou hast done,  
Nor wilt thou more be strange to any one.’

So scarce had he done speaking, ere his wings  
Within the doorway of the hall did gleam,  
And then he vanished quite; and all these things  
Unto Jovinian little more did seem  
Than some distinct and well-remembered dream,  
From which one wakes amidst a feverish night,  
Taking the moonshine for the morning light.

Silent he stood, not moving for a while,  
Pondering o’er all these wondrous things, until  
The Queen arose from sleep, and with a smile,

Said, 'O fair lord, your great men by your will  
E'en as I speak the banquet-chamber fill,  
To greet thee amidst joy and revelling,  
Wilt thou not therefore meet them as a King?'

So from that place of marvels having gone,  
Half mazed, he soon was clad in rich array,  
And sat thereafter on his kingly throne,  
As though no other had sat there that day;  
Nor did a soul of all his household say  
A word about the man, who on that morn  
Had stood there, naked, helpless, and forlorn.

But ever day by day the thought of it  
Within Jovinian's heart the clearer grew,  
As o'er his head the ceaseless time did flit,  
And everything still towards its ending drew,  
New things becoming old, and old things new  
Till, when a moment of eternity  
Had passed, grey-headed did Jovinian lie

One sweet May morning, wakeful in his bed;  
And thought, 'That day is thirty years a-gone  
Since useless folly came into my head,  
Whereby, before the steps of mine own throne,  
I stood in helpless agony alone,  
And of the wondrous things that there befell,  
When I am gone there will be none to tell:

'No man is now alive that thinks that he,  
Who bade thrust out the madman on that tide,  
Was other than the King they used to see:  
Long years have passed now, since the hermit died,  
So must I tell the tale, ere by his side  
I lie, lest it be unrecorded quite,  
Like a forgotten dream in morning light.

‘Yea, lest I die ere night come, this same day  
Unto some scribe will I tell everything,  
That it may lie when I am gone away,  
Stored up within the archives of the King;  
And may God grant the words thereof may ring  
Like His own voice in the next comer’s ears!  
Whereby his folk shall shed the fewer tears.’

So it was done, and at the King’s command  
A clerk that day did note it every whit,  
And after by a man of skilful hand  
In golden letters fairly was it writ.  
Yet little heed the new King took of it  
That filled the throne when King Jovinian died,  
So much did all things feed his swelling pride.

But whether God chastised him in his turn,  
And he grew wise thereafter, I know not;  
I think by eld alone he came to learn  
How lowly on some day must be his lot.  
But ye, O Kings, think all that ye have got  
To be but gawds cast out upon some heap,  
And stolen the while the Master was asleep.

## ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

1837–1909

### CHORUS FROM ‘ATALANTA’

WHEN the hounds of spring are on winter’s traces,  
The mother of months in meadow or plain  
Fills the shadows and windy places

With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain;  
And the brown bright nightingale amorous  
Is half assuaged for Itylus,  
For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,  
The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with emptying of quivers,  
 Maiden most perfect, lady of light,  
 With a noise of winds and many rivers,  
 With a clamour of waters, and with might;  
 Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,  
 Over the splendour and speed of thy feet;  
 For the faint east quickens, the wan west shivers,  
 Round the feet of the day and the feet of the night.

Where shall we find her, how shall we sing to her,  
 Fold our hands round her knees, and cling?  
 O that man's heart were as fire and could spring to  
 her,

Fire, or the strength of the streams that spring!  
 For the stars and the winds are unto her  
 As raiment, as songs of the harp-player;  
 For the risen stars and the fallen cling to her,  
 And the southwest-wind and the west-wind sing.

For winter's rains and ruins are over,  
 And all the season of snows and sins;  
 The days dividing lover and lover,  
 The light that loses, the night that wins;  
 And time remember'd is grief forgotten,  
 And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,  
 And in green underwood and cover  
 Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

The full streams feed on flower of rushes,  
 Ripe grasses trammel a travelling foot,  
 The faint fresh flame of the young year flushes  
 From leaf to flower and flower to fruit;  
 And fruit and leaf are as gold and fire,  
 And the oat is heard above the lyre,  
 And the hoofèd heel of a satyr crushes  
 The chestnut-husk at the chestnut-root.

And Pan by noon and Bacchus by night,  
Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,  
Follows with dancing and fills with delight  
The Mænad and the Bassarid;  
And soft as lips that laugh and hide  
The laughing leaves of the trees divide,  
And screen from seeing and leave in sight  
The god pursuing, the maiden hid.  
The ivy falls with the Bacchanal's hair  
Over her eyebrows hiding her eyes;  
The wild vine slipping down leaves bare  
Her bright breast shortening into sighs;  
The wild vine slips with the weight of its leaves,  
But the berried ivy catches and cleaves  
To the limbs that glitter, the feet that scare  
The wolf that follows, the fawn that flies.

## ITYLUS

SWALLOW, my sister, O sister swallow,  
How can thine heart be full of the spring?  
A thousand summers are over and dead.  
What hast thou found in the spring to follow?  
What hast thou found in thine heart to sing?  
What wilt thou do when the summer is shed?  
O swallow, sister, O fair swift swallow,  
Why wilt thou fly after spring to the south,  
The soft south whither thine heart is set?  
Shall not the grief of the old time follow?  
Shall not the song thereof cleave to thy mouth?  
Hast thou forgotten ere I forget?  
Sister, my sister, O fleet sweet swallow,  
Thy way is long to the sun and the south;  
But I, fulfilled of my heart's desire,



Shedding my song upon height, upon hollow,  
 From tawny body and sweet small mouth  
 Feed the heart of the night with fire.

I the nightingale all spring through,  
 O swallow, sister, O changing swallow,  
 All spring through till the spring be done,  
 Clothed with the light of the night on the dew,  
 Sing, while the hours and the wild birds follow,  
 Take flight and follow and find the sun.

Sister, my sister, O soft light swallow,  
 Though all things feast in the spring's guest-  
 chamber,  
 How hast thou heart to be glad thereof yet?  
 For where thou fliest I shall not follow,  
 Till life forget and death remember,  
 Till thou remember and I forget.

Swallow, my sister, O singing swallow,  
 I know not how thou hast heart to sing.  
 Hast thou the heart? is it all past over?  
 Thy lord the summer is good to follow,  
 And fair the feet of thy lover the spring:  
 But what wilt thou say to the spring thy lover?

O swallow, sister, O fleeting swallow,  
 My heart in me is a molten ember  
 And over my head the waves have met.  
 But thou wouldst tarry or I would follow,  
 Could I forget or thou remember,  
 Couldst thou remember and I forget.

O sweet stray sister, O shifting swallow,  
 The heart's division divideth us.  
 Thy heart is light as a leaf of a tree;

But mine goes forth among sea-gulfs hollow  
 To the place of the slaying of Itylus,  
 The feast of Daulis, the Thracian sea.

O swallow, sister, O rapid swallow,  
 I pray thee sing not a little space.  
 Are not the roofs and the lintels wet?

The woven web that was plain to follow,  
 The small slain body, the flowerlike face,  
 Can I remember if thou forget?

O sister, sister, thy first-begotten!  
 The hands that cling and the feet that follow,  
 The voice of the child's blood crying yet,  
*Who hath remembered me? who hath forgotten?*  
 Thou hast forgotten, O summer swallow,  
 But the world shall end when I forget.

#### HOPE AND FEAR

BENEATH the shadow of dawn's aerial cope,  
 With eyes enkindled as the sun's own sphere,  
 Hope from the front of youth in godlike cheer  
 Looks Godward, past the shades where blind men  
 grope

Round the dark door that prayers nor dreams can ope,  
 And makes for joy the very darkness dear [fear  
 That gives her wide wings play; nor dreams that  
 At noon may rise and pierce the heart of hope.

Then, when the soul leaves off to dream and yearn,  
 May truth first purge her eyesight to discern  
 What once being known leaves time no power to  
 appal;

Till youth at last, ere yet youth be not, learn  
 The kind wise word that falls from years that fall—  
*'Hope thou not much, and fear thou not at all.'*



## DAVID GRAY

1838-1861

## SONNET

OCTOBER's gold is dim—the forests rot,  
 The weary rain falls ceaseless, while the day  
 Is wrapped in damp. In mire of village-way  
 The hedge-row leaves are stamped, and, all forgot,  
 The broodless nest sits visible in the thorn.  
 Autumn, among her drooping marigolds,  
 Weeps all her garnered sheaves, and empty folds,  
 And dripping orchards—plundered and forlorn.  
 The season is a dead one, and I die!  
 No more, no more for me the spring shall make  
 A resurrection in the earth and take  
 The death from out her heart—O God, I die!  
 The cold throat-mist creeps nearer, till I breathe  
 Corruption. Drop, stark night, upon my death!

## FRANCIS BRET HARTE

1839-1902

## THAT HEATHEN CHINEE

Table Mountain, 1870

WHICH I wish to remark—  
 And my language is plain—  
 That for ways that are dark,  
 And for tricks that are vain,  
 The heathen Chinee is peculiar,  
 Which the same I would rise to explain.  
 Ah Sin was his name;  
 And I shall not deny,  
 In regard to the same,  
 What that name might imply;

But his smile it was pensive and child-like,  
As I frequent remarked to Bill Nye.

It was August the third,  
And quite soft was the skies;  
Which it might be inferred  
That Ah Sin was likewise;  
Yet he played it that day upon William  
And me in a way I despise.

Which we had a small game,  
And Ah Sin took a hand:  
It was Euchre. The same  
He did not understand;  
But he smiled, as he sat by the table,  
With the smile that was child-like and bland.

Yet the cards they were stocked  
In a way that I grieve,  
And my feelings were shocked  
At the state of Nye's sleeve,  
Which was stuffed full of aces and bowers,  
And the same with intent to deceive.

But the hands that were played  
By that heathen Chineese,  
And the points that he made  
Were quite frightful to see—  
Till at last he put down a right bower,  
Which the same Nye had dealt unto me.

Then I looked up at Nye,  
And he gazed upon me;  
And he rose with a sigh,  
And said, 'Can this be?  
We are ruined by Chinese cheap labour,—'  
And he went for that heathen Chineese.

In the scene that ensued  
I did not take a hand,  
But the floor it was strewed,  
Like the leaves on the strand;  
With the cards that Ah Sin had been hiding,  
In the game 'he did not understand'.

In his sleeves, which were long—  
He had twenty-four packs—  
Which was coming it strong,  
Yet I state but the facts;  
And we found on his nails, which were taper,  
What is frequent in tapers—that's wax.

Which is why I remark,  
And my language is plain,  
That for ways that are dark,  
And for tricks that are vain,  
The heathen Chineese is peculiar—  
Which the same I am free to maintain.

### THE RÉVEILLÉ

HARK! I hear the tramp of thousands,  
And of armèd men the hum;  
Lo! a nation's hosts have gathered  
Round the quick alarming drum,—  
Saying, 'Come,  
Freemen, come!  
Ere your heritage be wasted,' said the quick alarm-  
ing drum.

'Let me of my heart take counsel:  
War is not of life the sum;

Who shall stay and reap the harvest  
When the autumn days shall come ?  
But the drum  
Echoed, 'Come!

Death shall reap the braver harvest,' said the  
solemn-sounding drum.

'But when won the coming battle,  
What of profit springs therefrom ?  
What if conquest, subjugation,  
Even greater ills become ?'  
But the drum  
Answered, 'Come!

You must do the sum to prove it,' said the Yankee-  
answering drum.

'What if, 'mid the cannons' thunder,  
Whistling shot and bursting bomb,  
When my brothers fall around me,  
Should my heart grow cold and numb ?'  
But the drum  
Answered, 'Come!

Better there in death united, than in life a recreant,  
—come!'

Thus they answered,—hoping, fearing,  
Some in faith, and doubting some,  
Till a trumpet-voice proclaiming,  
Said, 'My chosen people, come!'  
Then the drum,

Lo! was dumb,  
For the great heart of the nation, throbbing,  
answered, 'Lord, we come!'

## GRIZZLY

COWARD,—of heroic size,  
In whose lazy muscles lies  
Strength we fear and yet despise;  
Savage,—whose relentless tusks  
Are content with acorn husks;  
Robber,—whose exploits ne'er soared  
O'er the bee's or squirrel's hoard;  
Whiskered chin and feeble nose,  
Claws of steel on baby toes,—  
Here, in solitude and shade,  
Shambling, shuffling plantigrade,  
Be thy courses undismayed!

Here, where Nature makes thy bed,  
Let thy rude, half-human tread  
Point to hidden Indian springs,  
Lost in ferns and fragrant grasses,  
Hovered o'er by timid wings,  
Where the wood-duck lightly passes,  
Where the wild-bee holds her sweets,—  
Epicurean retreats,  
Fit for thee, and better than  
Fearful spoils of dangerous man.

In thy fat-jowled deviltry  
Friar Tuck shall live in thee;  
Thou mayst levy tithe and dole;  
Thou shalt spread the woodland cheer,  
From the pilgrim taking toll;  
Match thy cunning with his fear;  
Eat, and drink, and have thy fill;  
Yet remain an outlaw still!

## AUSTIN DOBSON

1840-1921

## THE BALLAD OF 'BEAU BROCADE'

*'Hark! I hear the sound of coaches!'*—BEGGAR'S OPERA.

SEVENTEEN hundred and thirty-nine:—  
That was the date of this tale of mine.

FIRST great GEORGE was buried and gone;  
GEORGE the Second was plodding on.

LONDON then, as the 'Guides' aver,  
Shared its glories with *Westminster*;

And people of rank to correct their 'tone',  
Went out of town to *Marybone*.

Those were the days of the War with *Spain*,  
PORTO-BELLO would soon be ta'en;

WHITEFIELD preached to the colliers grim,  
Bishops in lawn sleeves preached at him;

WALPOLE talked of 'a man and his price';  
Nobody's virtue was over-nice;

Those, in fine, were the brave days when  
Coaches were stopped by . . . *Highwaymen*!

And of all the knights of the gentle trade  
Nobody bolder than 'BEAU BROCADE'.

This they knew on the whole way down;  
Best,—maybe,—at the '*Oak and Crown*'.

(For timorous cits on their pilgrimage  
Would 'club' for a 'Guard' to ride the stage;  
And the Guard that rode on more than one  
Was the Host of this hostel's sister's son.)

Open we here on a March day fine,  
Under the oak with the hanging sign.  
There was barber DICK with his basin by;  
Cobbler JOE with the patch on his eye;  
Portly product of Beef and Beer,  
JOHN the host, he was standing near.  
Straining and creaking, with wheels awry,  
Lumbering came the '*Plymouth Fly*';—  
Lumbering up from *Bagshot Heath*,  
Guard in the basket armed to the teeth;  
Passengers heavily armed inside;  
Not the less surely the coach had been tried!  
Tried!—but a couple of miles away,  
By a well-dressed man!—in the open day!  
Tried successfully, never a doubt,—  
Pockets of passengers all turned out!  
Cloak-bags rifled, and cushions ripped,—  
Even an Ensign's wallet stripped!  
Even a Methodist hosier's wife  
Offered the choice of her Money or Life!  
Highwayman's manners no less polite,  
Hoped that their coppers (returned) were right;—  
Sorry to find the company poor,  
Hoped next time they'd travel with more;—  
Plucked them all at his ease, in short:—  
Such was the '*Plymouth Fly's*' report.  
Sympathy! horror! and wonderment!  
'Catch the Villain!' (But Nobody went.)  
Hosier's wife led into the Bar,  
(That's where the best strong waters are!).

Followed the tale of the hundred-and-one  
Things that Somebody ought to have done.  
Ensign (of BRAGG's) made a terrible clangour:  
But for the Ladies had drawn his hanger!  
Robber, of course, was 'BEAU BROCADE';  
Out-spoke DOLLY the Chambermaid.  
Devonshire DOLLY, plump and red,  
Spoke from the gallery overhead;—  
Spoke it out boldly, staring hard:—  
'Why didn't you shoot then, GEORGE the Guard?'  
Spoke it out bolder, seeing him mute:—  
'GEORGE the Guard, why didn't you shoot?'  
Portly JOHN grew pale and red,  
(JOHN was afraid of her, people said;)  
Gasped that 'DOLLY was surely cracked'  
(JOHN was afraid of her—that's a fact!)  
GEORGE the Guard grew red and pale,  
Slowly finished his quart of ale:—  
'Shoot? Why—Rabbit him!—didn't he shoot?'  
Muttered—'The Baggage was far too 'cute!'  
'Shoot? Why, he'd flashed the pan in his eye!'  
Muttered—'She'd pay for it by and by!'  
Further than this made no reply.  
Nor could a further reply be made,  
*For GEORGE was in league with 'BEAU BROCADE'!*  
And JOHN the Host, in his wakefullest state,  
Was not—on the whole—immaculate.  
But nobody's virtue was over-nice  
When WALPOLE talked of 'a man and his price';  
And wherever Purity found abode,  
'Twas certainly *not* on a posting road.



## II

'Forty' followed to 'Thirty-nine',  
Glorious days of the *Hanover* line!

Princes were born, and drums were banged;  
Now and then batches of Highwaymen hanged.

'Glorious news!'—from the *Spanish Main*;  
PORTO-BELLO at last was ta'en.

'Glorious news!'—for the liquor trade;  
Nobody dreamed of 'BEAU BROCADE'.

People were thinking of *Spanish Crowns*;  
*Money* was coming from seaport towns!

Nobody dreamed of 'BEAU BROCADE',  
(Only DOLLY the Chambermaid!)

Blessings on VERNON! Fill up the cans;  
*Money* was coming in '*Flys*' and '*Vans*'.

Possibly, JOHN the Host had heard;  
Also, certainly, GEORGE the Guard.

And DOLLY had possibly tidings, too,  
That made her rise from her bed anew,

Plump as ever, but stern of eye,  
With a fixed intention to warn the '*Fly*'.

Lingering only at JOHN his door,  
Just to make sure of a jerky snore;

Saddling the grey mare, *Dumpling Star*;  
Fetching the pistol out of the bar;

(The old horse-pistol that, they say,  
Came from the battle of *Malplaquet*;) )

Loading with powder that maids would use,  
Even in 'Forty', to clear the flues;

And a couple of silver buttons, the Squire  
Gave her, away in *Devonshire*.

These she wadded—for want of better—  
With the B-SH-P of L-ND-N's 'Pastoral Letter';  
Looked to the flint, and hung the whole,  
Ready to use, at her pocket-hole.

Thus equipped and accoutred, DOLLY  
Clattered away to '*Exciseman's Folly*';—  
Such was the name of a ruined abode,  
Just on the edge of the *London* road.

Thence she thought she might safely try,  
As soon as she saw it, to warn the '*Fly*'.

But, as chance fell out, her rein she drew,  
As the BEAU came cantering into the view.

By the light of the moon she could see him drest  
In his famous gold-sprigged tambour vest;

And under his silver-grey surtout,  
The laced, historical coat of blue,

That he wore when he went to *London-Spaw*,  
And robbed Sir MUNGO MUCKLETHRAW.

Out-spoke DOLLY the Chambermaid,  
(Trembling a little, but not afraid,)  
'Stand and Deliver, O "BEAU BROCADE"!'

But the BEAU drew nearer, and would not speak,  
For he saw by the moonlight a rosy cheek;

And a spavined mare with a rusty hide;  
And a girl with her hand at her pocket-side.

So never a word he spoke as yet,  
For he thought 'twas a freak of MEG or BET;—  
A freak of the '*Rose*' or the '*Rummer*' set.

Out-spoke DOLLY the Chambermaid,  
(Tremulous now, and sore afraid,)  
'Stand and Deliver, O "BEAU BROCADE"!'—

Firing then, out of sheer alarm,  
Hit the BEAU in the bridle-arm.

Button the first went none knows where,  
But it carried away his *solitaire*;

Button the second a circuit made,  
Glanced in under the shoulder-blade;—  
Down from the saddle fell 'BEAU BROCADE'!

Down from the saddle and never stirred!—  
DOLLY grew white as a *Windsor* curd.

Slipped not less from the mare, and bound  
Strips of her kirtle about his wound.

Then, lest his Worship should rise and flee,  
Fettered his ankles—tenderly.

Jumped on his chestnut, BET the fleet  
(Called after BET of *Portugal Street*);  
Came like the wind to the old Inn-door;—  
Roused fat JOHN from a threefold snore;—  
Vowed she'd 'peach if he misbehaved . . .  
Briefly, the '*Plymouth Fly*' was saved!

*Staines* and *Windsor* were all on fire:—  
DOLLY was wed to a *Yorkshire* squire;  
Went to Town at the K—G's desire!

But whether His M—J—STY saw her or not,  
HOGARTH jotted her down on the spot;  
And something of DOLLY one still may trace  
In the fresh contours of his '*Milkmaid's*' face.

GEORGE the Guard fled over the sea:  
JOHN had a fit—of perplexity;

Turned King's evidence, sad to state;—  
 But JOHN was never immaculate.  
 As for the BEAU, he was duly tried,  
 When his wound was healed, at *Whitsuntide*;  
 Served—for a day—as the last of 'sights',  
 To the world of *St. James's-Street* and '*White's*',  
 Went on his way to TYBURN TREE,  
 With a pomp befitting his high degree.  
 Every privilege rank confers:—  
 Bouquet of pinks at *St. Sepulchre's*;  
 Flagon of ale at *Holborn Bar*;  
 Friends (in mourning) to follow his Car—  
 ('t' is omitted where HEROES are!)  
 Every one knows the speech he made;  
 Swore that he 'rather admired the Jade!'—  
 Waved to the crowd with his gold-laced hat;  
 Talked to the Chaplain after that;  
 Turned to the Topsman undismayed . . .  
 This was the finish of '*BEAU BROCADE*'!

---

*And this is the Ballad that seemed to hide  
 In the leaves of a dusty 'LONDONER'S GUIDE';  
 'Humbly Inscribed (with curls and tails)  
 By the Author to FREDERICK, Prince of WALES:—  
 'Published by FRANCIS and OLIVER PINE;  
 Ludgate-Hill, at the Blackmoor Sign.  
 Seventeen-Hundred-and Thirty-Nine.'*

## THOMAS HARDY

1840-1928

## IN TIME OF THE BREAKING OF NATIONS

ONLY a man harrowing clods  
 In a slow silent walk  
 With an old horse that stumbles and nods  
 Half asleep as they stalk.

Only thin smoke without flame  
 From the heaps of couch-grass;  
 Yet this will go onward the same  
 Though Dynasties pass.

Yonder a maid and her wight  
 Come whispering by:  
 War's annals will cloud into night  
 Ere their story die.

## THE CASTERBRIDGE CAPTAINS

*(Khyber Pass, 1842)*

*A Tradition of J. B. L——, T. G. B——,  
 and J. L——*

THREE captains went to Indian wars,  
 And only one returned:  
 Their mate of yore, he singly wore  
 The laurels all had earned.

At home he sought the ancient aisle  
 Wherein, untrumped of fame,  
 The three had sat in pupilage,  
 And each had carved his name.

The names, rough-hewn, of equal size,  
Stood on the panel still;  
Unequal since.—'Twas theirs to aim,  
Mine was it to fulfil!

—'Who saves his life shall lose it, friends!'  
Outspake the preacher then,  
Unweeting he his listener, who  
Looked at the names again.

That he had come and they'd been stayed,  
'Twas but the chance of war:  
Another chance, and they'd sat here,  
And he had lain afar.

Yet saw he something in the lives  
Of those who'd ceased to live  
That sphered them with a majesty  
Which living failed to give.

Transcendent triumph in return  
No longer lit his brain;  
Transcendence rayed the distant urn  
Where slept the fallen twain.

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

1844-1889

THE STARLIGHT NIGHT

Look at the stars! look, look up at the skies!  
O look at all the fire-folk sitting in the air!  
The bright boroughs, the circle-citadels there!  
Down in dim woods the diamond delves! the elves'-  
eyes!

The grey lawns cold where gold, where quickgold  
lies!

Wind-beat whitebeam! airy abeles set on a flare!  
Flake-doves sent floating forth at a farmyard  
scare!—

Ah well! it is all a purchase, all is a prize.

Buy then! bid then!—What?—Prayer, patience,  
alms, vows.

Look, look: a May-mess, like on orchard boughs!

Look! March-bloom, like on mealed-with-yellow  
sallows!

These are indeed the barn; withindoors house

The shocks. This piece-bright paling shuts the  
spouse

Christ home, Christ and his mother and all his  
hallows.

## ROBERT BRIDGES

1844—1930

### THERE IS A HILL BESIDE THE SILVER THAMES

THERE is a hill beside the silver Thames,  
Shady with birch and beech and odorous pine:  
And brilliant underfoot with thousand gems  
Steeply the thickets to his floods decline.

Straight trees in every place

Their thick tops interlace,

And pendant branches trail their foliage fine

Upon his watery face.

Swift from the sweltering pasturage he flows:

His stream, alert to seek the pleasant shade,

Pictures his gentle purpose, as he goes

Straight to the caverned pool his toil has made.

His winter floods lay bare  
The stout roots in the air:  
His summer streams are cool, when they have played  
Among their fibrous hair.

A rushy island guards the sacred bower,  
And hides it from the meadow, where in peace  
The lazy cows wrench many a scented flower,  
Robbing the golden market of the bees:  
And laden barges float  
By banks of myosote;  
And scented flag and golden flower-de-lys  
Delay the loitering boat.

And on this side the island, where the pool  
Eddies away, are tangled mass on mass  
The water-weeds, that net the fishes cool,  
And scarce allow a narrow stream to pass;  
Where spreading crowfoot mars  
The drowning nenuphars,  
Waving the tassels of her silken grass  
Below her silver stars.

But in the purple pool there nothing grows,  
Not the white water-lily spoked with gold;  
Though best she loves the hollows, and well knows  
On quiet streams her broad shields to unfold:  
Yet should her roots but try  
Within these deeps to lie,  
Not her long reaching stalk could ever hold  
Her waxen head so high.

Sometimes an angler comes, and drops his hook  
Within its hidden depths, and 'gainst a tree  
Leaning his rod, reads in some pleasant book,  
Forgetting soon his pride of fishery;



And dreams, or falls asleep,  
While curious fishes peep  
About his nibbled bait, or scornfully  
Dart off and rise and leap.

And sometimes a slow figure 'neath the trees,  
In ancient-fashioned smock, with tottering care  
Upon a staff propping his weary knees,  
May by the pathway of the forest fare:  
As from a buried day  
Across the mind will stray  
Some perishing mute shadow,—and unaware  
He passeth on his way.

Else, he that wishes solitude is safe,  
Whether he bathe at morning in the stream:  
Or lead his love there when the hot hours chafe  
The meadows, busy with a blurring steam;  
Or watch, as fades the light,  
The gibbous moon grow bright,  
Until her magic rays dance in a dream,  
And glorify the night.

Where is this bower beside the silver Thames?  
O pool and flowery thickets, hear my vow!  
O trees of freshest foliage and straight stems,  
No sharer of my secret I allow:  
Lest ere I come the while  
Strange feet your shades defile;  
Or lest the burly oarsman turn his prow  
Within your guardian isle.

## A PASSER BY

WHITHER, O splendid ship, thy white sails crowding,  
Leaning across the bosom of the urgent West,  
That fearest nor sea rising, nor sky clouding,

Whither away, fair rover, and what thy quest?

Ah! soon, when Winter has all our vales opprest,  
When skies are cold and misty, and hail is hurling,

Wilt thou glide on the blue Pacific, or rest  
In a summer haven asleep, thy white sails furling?

I there before thee, in the country that well thou  
knowest,

Already arrived am inhaling the odorous air:

I watch thee enter unerringly where thou goest,  
And anchor queen of the strange shipping there,

Thy sails for awnings spread, thy masts bare;  
Nor is aught from the foaming reef to the snow-  
capped, grandest

Peak, that is over the feathery palms more fair  
Than thou, so upright, so stately, and still thou  
standest.

And yet, O splendid ship, unhailed and nameless,

I know not if, aiming a fancy, I rightly divine  
That thou hast a purpose joyful, a courage blame-  
less,

Thy port assured in a happier land than mine.

But for all I have given thee, beauty enough is  
thine,

As thou, aslant with trim tackle and shrouding,

From the proud nostril curve of a prow's line  
In the offing scatterest foam, thy white sails  
crowding.

## LONDON SNOW

WHEN men were all asleep the snow came flying,  
In large white flakes falling on the city brown,  
Stealthily and perpetually settling and loosely lying,  
Hushing the latest traffic of the drowsy town;  
Deadening, muffling, stifling its murmurs failing;  
Lazily and incessantly floating down and down:

Silently sifting and veiling road, roof and railing;  
Hiding difference, making unevenness even,  
Into angles and crevices softly drifting and sailing.

All night it fell, and when full inches seven  
It lay in the depth of its uncompacted lightness,  
The clouds blew off from a high and frosty heaven;  
And all woke earlier for the unaccustomed  
brightness

Of the winter dawning, the strange unheavenly  
glare:

The eye marvelled—marvelled at the dazzling  
whiteness;

The ear hearkened to the stillness of the solemn  
air;

No sound of wheel rumbling nor of foot falling,  
And the busy morning cries came thin and spare.

Then boys I heard, as they went to school,  
calling,

They gathered up the crystal manna to freeze  
Their tongues with tasting, their hands with snow-  
balling;

Or rioted in a drift, plunging up to the knees;  
Or peering up from under the white-mossed wonder,  
'O look at the trees!' they cried, 'O look at the  
trees!'

With lessened load a few carts creak and blunder,

Following along the white deserted way,  
A country company long dispersed asunder:

When now already the sun, in pale display  
Standing by Paul's high dome, spread forth below  
His sparkling beams, and awoke the stir of the day.

For now doors open, and war is waged with the  
snow;

And trains of sombre men, past tale of number,  
Tread long brown paths, as toward their toil they go:

But even for them awhile no cares encumber  
Their minds diverted; the daily word is unspoken,  
The daily thoughts of labour and sorrow slumber  
At the sight of the beauty that greets them, for the  
charm they have broken.

## WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

1849-1903

### OUT OF THE NIGHT

OUT of the night that covers me,  
Black as the pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate:  
I am the captain of my soul.

## ENGLAND, MY ENGLAND

WHAT have I done for you,  
England, my England?  
What is there I would not do,  
England, my own?  
With your glorious eyes austere,  
As the Lord were walking near,  
Whispering terrible things and dear  
As the Song on your bugles blown,  
England—  
Round the world on your bugles blown!  
Where shall the watchful sun,  
England, my England,  
Match the master-work you've done,  
England, my own?  
When shall he rejoice agen  
Such a breed of mighty men  
As come forward, one to ten,  
To the Song on your bugles blown,  
England—  
Down the years on your bugles blown?  
Ever the faith endures,  
England, my England:—  
'Take and break us: we are yours,  
England, my own!  
Life is good, and joy runs high  
Between English earth and sky:  
Death is death; but we shall die.

To the Song on your bugles blown,  
England—  
To the stars on your bugles blown!’

They call you proud and hard,  
England, my England:  
You with worlds to watch and ward,  
England, my own!  
You whose mailed hand keeps the keys  
Of such teeming destinies,  
You could know nor dread nor ease  
Were the Song on your bugles blown,  
England,  
Round the Pit on your bugles blown!

Mother of Ships whose might,  
England, my England,  
Is the fierce old Sea’s delight,  
England, my own,  
Chosen daughter of the Lord,  
Spouse-in-Chief of the ancient Sword,  
There’s the menace of the Word  
In the Song on your bugles blown,  
England—  
Out of heaven on your bugles blown!

### ALICE MEYNELL

1849–1922

#### CHRIST IN THE UNIVERSE

WITH this ambiguous earth  
His dealings have been told us. These abide:  
The signal to a maid, the human birth,  
The lesson, and the young Man crucified.

But not a star of all  
The innumerable host of stars has heard  
How He administered this terrestrial ball.  
Our race have kept their Lord's entrusted Word.

Of His earth-visiting feet  
None knows the secret, cherished, perilous,  
The terrible, shamefast, frightened, whispered,  
sweet,  
Heart-shattering secret of His way with us.

No planet knows that this  
Our wayside planet, carrying land and wave,  
Love and life multiplied, and pain and bliss,  
Bears, as chief treasure, one forsaken grave.

Nor, in our little day,  
May His devices with the heavens be guessed,  
His pilgrimage to thread the Milky Way  
Or his bestowals there be manifest.

But in the eternities,  
Doubtless we shall compare together, hear  
A million alien Gospels, in what guise  
He trod the Pleiades, the Lyre, the Bear.

O, be prepared, my soul!  
To read the inconceivable, to scan  
The million forms of God those stars unroll  
When, in our turn, we show to them a Man.

#### AT NIGHT

#### *To W. M.*

HOME, home from the horizon far and clear,  
Hither the soft wings sweep;  
Flocks of the memories of the day draw near  
The dovecote doors of sleep.

Oh, which are they that come through sweetest  
light

Of all these homing birds?

Which with the straightest and the swiftest flight?

Your words to me, your words!

## ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

1850-1894

### THE VAGABOND

GIVE to me the life I love,  
Let the lave go by me,  
Give the jolly heaven above  
And the by-way nigh me.  
Bed in the bush with stars to see,  
Bread I dip in the river—  
There's the life for a man like me,  
There's the life for ever.

Let the blow fall soon or late,  
Let what will be o'er me:  
Give the face of earth around  
And the road before me.  
Wealth I seek not, hope nor love,  
Nor a friend to know me;  
All I seek, the heaven above  
And the road below me.

Or let autumn fall on me  
Where afield I linger,  
Silencing the bird on tree  
Biting the blue finger.

lave] rest, remainder.



White as meal the frosty field—  
Warm the fireside haven—  
Not to autumn will I yield,  
Not to winter even!

Let the blow fall soon or late,  
Let what will be o'er me;  
Give the face of earth around,  
And the road before me.  
Wealth I ask not, hope nor love,  
Nor a friend to know me;  
All I ask, the heaven above,  
And the road below me.

## ROMANCE

I WILL make you brooches and toys for your delight  
Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night.  
I will make a palace fit for you and me,  
Of green days in forests and blue days at sea.

I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your  
room,  
Where white flows the river and bright blows the  
broom,  
And you shall wash your linen and keep your body  
white  
In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.

And this shall be for music when no one else is near,  
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!  
That only I remember, that only you admire,  
Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside  
fire.

## THE HOUSE BEAUTIFUL

*A naked house, a naked moor,  
A shivering pool before the door,  
A garden bare of flowers and fruit  
And poplars at the garden foot:  
Such is the place that I live in,  
Bleak without and bare within.*

Yet shall your ragged moor receive  
The incomparable pomp of eve,  
And the cold glories of the dawn  
Behind your shivering trees be drawn;  
And when the wind from place to place  
Doth the unmoored cloud-galleons chase,  
Your garden gloom and gleam again,  
With leaping sun, with glancing rain.  
Here shall the wizard moon ascend  
The heavens, in the crimson end  
Of day's declining splendour; here  
The army of the stars appear.  
The neighbour hollows dry or wet,  
Spring shall with tender flowers beset;  
And oft the morning muser see  
Larks rising from the broomy lea,  
And every fairy wheel and thread  
Of cobweb dew-bediamonded.  
When daisies go, shall winter time  
Silver the simple grass with rime;  
Autumnal frosts enchant the pool  
And make the cart-ruts beautiful;  
And when snow-bright the moor expands,  
How shall your children clap their hands!  
To make this earth our hermitage,  
A cheerful and a changeful page,

God's bright and intricate device  
Of days and seasons doth suffice.

## REQUIEM

UNDER the wide and starry sky,  
Dig the grave and let me lie.  
Glad did I live and gladly die,  
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me:  
*Here he lies where he longed to be;*  
*Home is the sailor, home from sea,*  
*And the hunter home from the hill.*

## OSCAR WILDE

1856-1900

## THEOCRITUS

## A VILLANELLE

O SINGER of Persephone!  
In the dim meadows desolate  
Dost thou remember Sicily?  
Still through the ivy flits the bee  
Where Amaryllis lies in state;  
O Singer of Persephone!  
Simætha calls on Hecate  
And hears the wild dogs at the gate;  
Dost thou remember Sicily?  
Still by the light and laughing sea  
Poor Polypheme bemoans his fate;  
O Singer of Persephone!

And still in boyish rivalry  
Young Daphnis challenges his mate;  
Dost thou remember Sicily?  
Slim Lacon keeps a goat for thee,  
For thee the jocund shepherds wait;  
O Singer of Persephone!  
Dost thou remember Sicily?

## JOHN DAVIDSON

1857-1909

## A RUNNABLE STAG

WHEN the pods went pop on the broom, green broom,  
And apples began to be golden-skinned,  
We harboured a stag in the Priory coomb,  
And we feathered his trail up-wind, up-wind,  
We feathered his trail up-wind—

A stag of warrant, a stag, a stag,  
A runnable stag, a kingly crop,  
Brow, bay and tray and three on top,  
A stag, a runnable stag.

Then the huntsman's horn rang yap, yap, yap,  
And 'Forwards' we heard the harbourer shout;  
But 'twas only a brocket that broke a gap  
In the beechen underwood, driven out  
From the underwood antlered out  
By warrant and might of the stag, the stag,  
The runnable stag, whose lordly mind  
Was bent on sleep, though beamed and tined  
He stood, a runnable stag.

So we tufted the covert till afternoon  
With Tinkerman's Pup and Bell-of-the-North;  
And hunters were sulky and hounds out of tune

Before we tufted the right stag forth,  
Before we tufted him forth,  
The stag of warrant, the wily stag,  
The runnable stag with his kingly crop,  
Brow, bay and tray and three on top,  
The royal and runnable stag.

It was Bell-of-the-North and Tinkerman's Pup  
That stuck to the scent till the copse was drawn.  
'Tally ho! tally ho!' and the hunt was up,  
The tufters whipped and the pack laid on,  
The resolute pack laid on,  
And the stag of warrant away at last,  
The runnable stag, the same, the same,  
His hoofs on fire, his horns like flame,  
A stag, a runnable stag.

'Let your gelding be: if you check or chide  
He stumbles at once and you're out of the hunt;  
For three hundred gentlemen, able to ride,  
On hunters accustomed to bear the brunt,  
Accustomed to bear the brunt,  
Are after the runnable stag, the stag,  
The runnable stag with his kingly crop,  
Brow, bay and tray and three on top,  
The right, the runnable stag.'

By perilous paths in coomb and dell,  
The heather, the rocks, and the river-bed,  
The pace grew hot, for the scent lay well,  
And a runnable stag goes right ahead,  
The quarry went right ahead—  
Ahead, ahead, and fast and far;  
His antlered crest, his cloven hoof,  
Brow, bay and tray and three aloof,  
The stag, the runnable stag.

For a matter of twenty miles and more,  
By the densest hedge and the highest wall,  
Through herds of bullocks he baffled the lore  
Of harbourer, huntsman, hounds and all,  
Of harbourer, hounds and all—

The stag of warrant, the wily stag,  
For twenty miles, and five and five,  
He ran, and he never was caught alive,  
This stag, this runnable stag.

When he turned at bay in the leafy gloom,  
In the emerald gloom where the brook ran deep,  
He heard in the distance the rollers boom,  
And he saw in a vision of peaceful sleep,  
In a wonderful vision of sleep,

A stag of warrant, a stag, a stag,  
A runnable stag in a jewelled bed,  
Under the sheltering ocean dead,  
A stag, a runnable stag.

So a fateful hope lit up his eye,  
And he opened his nostrils wide again,  
And he tossed his branching antlers high  
As he headed the hunt down the Charlock glen,  
As he raced down the echoing glen  
For five miles more, the stag, the stag,  
For twenty miles, and five and five,  
Not to be caught now, dead or alive,  
The stag, the runnable stag.

Three hundred gentlemen, able to ride,  
Three hundred horses as gallant and free,  
Beheld him escape on the evening tide,  
Far out till he sank in the Severn Sea,  
Till he sank in the depths of the sea—

The stag, the buoyant stag, the stag  
That slept at last in a jewelled bed  
Under the sheltering ocean spread,  
The stag, the runnable stag.

## IN ROMNEY MARSH

As I went down to Dymchurch Wall,  
I heard the South sing o'er the land ;  
I saw the yellow sunlight fall  
On knolls where Norman churches stand.

And ringing shrilly, taut and lithe,  
Within the wind a core of sound,  
The wire from Romney town to Hythe  
Alone its airy journey wound.

A veil of purple vapour flowed  
And trailed its fringe along the Straits ;  
The upper air like sapphire glowed ;  
And roses filled Heaven's central gates.

Masts in the offing wagged their tops ;  
The swinging waves pealed on the shore ;  
The saffron beach, all diamond drops  
And beads of surge, prolonged the roar.

As I came up from Dymchurch Wall,  
I saw above the Downs' low crest  
The crimson brands of sunset fall,  
Flicker and fade from out the west.

Night sank: like flakes of silver fire  
The stars in one great shower came down ;  
Shrill blew the wind ; and shrill the wire  
Rang out from Hythe to Romney town.

The darkly shining salt sea drops  
Streamed as the waves clashed on the shore;  
The beach, with all its organ stops  
Pealing again, prolonged the roar.

## FRANCIS THOMPSON

1859-1907

## THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

I FLED Him, down the nights and down the days;  
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;  
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways  
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears  
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.

Up vistaed hopes, I sped;  
And shot, precipitated,  
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmèd fears,  
From those strong Feet that followed, followed  
after.

But with unhurrying chase,  
And unperturbèd pace,  
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
They beat—and a Voice beat  
More instant than the Feet—

‘All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.’

I pleaded, outlaw-wise,  
By many a hearted casement, curtained red,  
Trellised with intertwining charities;  
(For, though I knew His love Who followèd,  
Yet was I sore adread  
Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside);  
But, if one little casement parted wide,



The gust of His approach would clash it to.  
Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.  
Across the margent of the world I fled,  
And troubled the gold gateways of the stars,  
Smiting for shelter on their clangèd bars;  
Fretted to dulcet jars  
And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon.  
I said to dawn: Be sudden; to eve: Be soon—  
With thy young skyey blossoms heap me over  
From this tremendous Lover!  
Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!  
I tempted all His servitors, but to find  
My own betrayal in their constancy,  
In faith to Him their fickleness to me,  
Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.  
To all swift things for swiftness did I sue;  
Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.  
But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,  
The long savannahs of the blue;  
Or whether, Thunder-driven,  
They clangèd His chariot 'thwart a heaven,  
Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o'  
their feet:—  
Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.  
Still with unhurrying chase,  
And unperturbèd pace,  
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
Came on the following Feet,  
And a Voice above their beat—  
'Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter  
Me.'

I sought no more that after which I strayed  
In face of man or maid;

But still within the little children's eyes  
Seems something, something that replies,  
*They* at least are for me, surely for me!

I turned me to them very wistfully;  
But just as their young eyes grew sudden fair  
With dawning answers there,  
Their angel plucked them from me by the hair.

'Come then, ye other children, Nature's—share  
With me' (said I) 'your delicate fellowship;

Let me greet you lip to lip,

Let me twine with you caresses,

Wantoning

With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses,

Banqueting

With her in her wind-walled palace,

Underneath her azured daïs,

Quaffing, as your taintless way is,

From a chalice

Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring.'

So it was done:

*I* in their delicate fellowship was one—

Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies.

*I* knew all the swift importings

On the wilful face of skies;

*I* knew how the clouds arise,

Spumèd of the wild sea-snortings;

All that's born or dies

Rose and drooped with; made them shapers  
Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine—

With them joyed and was bereaven.

*I* was heavy with the even,

When she lit her glimmering tapers

Round the day's dead sanctities.

*I* laughed in the morning's eyes.

I triumphed and I saddened with all weather,  
Heaven and I wept together,  
And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine;  
Against the red throb of its sunset-heart  
I laid my own to beat,  
And share commingling heat;  
But not by that, by that, was eased my human  
smart.  
In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's grey cheek.  
For ah! we know not what each other says,  
These things and I; in sound *I* speak—  
*Their* sound is but their stir, they speak by silences.  
Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth;  
Let her, if she would owe me,  
Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me  
The breasts o' her tenderness:  
Never did any milk of hers once bless  
My thirsting mouth.  
Nigh and nigh draws the chase,  
With unperturbèd pace,  
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
And past those noisèd Feet  
A Voice comes yet more fleet—  
'Lo! naught contents thee, who content'st  
not Me.'

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!  
My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me,  
And smitten me to my knee;  
I am defenceless utterly.  
I slept, methinks, and woke,  
And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.  
In the rash lustihead of my young powers,  
I shook the pillaring hours

And pulled my life upon me ; grimed with smears,  
I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years—  
My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.  
My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,  
Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.

Yea, faileth now even dream

The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist ;  
Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist  
I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,  
Are yielding ; cords of all too weak account  
For earth, with heavy griefs so overplussed.

Ah ! is Thy love indeed

A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,  
Suffering no flowers except its own to mount ?

Ah ! must—

Designer infinite!—

Ah ! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn  
with it ?

My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the  
dust ;

And now my heart is as a broken fount,  
Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever  
From the dank thoughts that shiver  
Upon the sighful branches of my mind.

Such is ; what is to be ?

The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind ?  
I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds ;  
Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds  
From the hid battlements of Eternity :  
Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then  
Round the half-glimpsèd turrets slowly wash again ;  
But not ere him who summoneth  
I first have seen, enwound

With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned ;

His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.  
Whether man's heart or life it be which yields  
Thee harvest, must Thy harvest fields  
Be dunged with rotten death?

Now of that long pursuit  
Comes on at hand the bruit;  
That Voice is round me like a bursting sea:  
'And is thy earth so marred,  
Shattered in shard on shard?  
Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me!  
Strange, piteous, futile thing,  
Wherefore should any set thee love apart?  
Seeing none but I makes much of naught' (He said),  
'And human love needs human meriting:  
How hast thou merited—  
Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?  
Alack, thou knowest not  
How little worthy of any love thou art!  
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,  
Save Me, save only Me?  
All which I took from thee I did but take,  
Not for thy harms,  
But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.  
All which thy child's mistake  
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:  
Rise, clasp My hand, and come.'

Halts by me that footfall:  
Is my gloom, after all,  
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?  
'Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,  
I am He Whom thou seekest!  
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.'

## LIONEL JOHNSON

1867-1902

COLLINS

THROUGH glades and glooms! Oh, fair! Oh, sad!  
The paths of song, that led through these  
Thy feet, that once were free and glad  
To wander beneath Winton trees!  
Now in soft shades of sleep they tread  
By ways and waters of the dead.

There tender Otway walks with thee,  
And Browne, not strange among the dead:  
By solemn sounding waters ye,  
By willow vallies, gently led,  
Think on old memories of her,  
Courtly and cloistral Winchester.

So memory's mingled measure flows,  
In shadowy dream and twilight trance:  
Past death, to dawn of manhood, goes  
Thy spirit's unforgetting glance;  
Through glades and glooms! And hails at last  
The lovely scenes long past: long past.

## EDWARD THOMAS

1878-1917

THE MANOR FARM

THE rock-like mud unfroze a little and rills  
Ran and sparkled down each side of the road  
Under the catkins wagging in the hedge.  
But earth would have her sleep out, spite of the sun;

Nor did I value that thin gilding beam  
More than a pretty February thing  
Till I came down to the old Manor Farm,  
And church and yew-tree opposite, in age  
Its equals and in size. The church and yew  
And farmhouse slept in a Sunday silentness.  
The air raised not a straw. The steep farm roof,  
With tiles duskily glowing, entertained  
The mid-day sun; and up and down the roof  
White pigeons nestled. There was no sound but  
one.

Three cart-horses were looking over a gate  
Drowsily through their forelocks, swishing their  
tails  
Against a fly, a solitary fly.

The Winter's cheek flushed as if he had drained  
Spring, Summer, and Autumn at a draught  
And smiled quietly. But 'twas not Winter—  
Rather a season of bliss unchangeable  
Awakened from farm and church where it had lain  
Safe under tile and thatch for ages since  
This England, Old already, was called Merry.

### THE COMBE

THE Combe was ever dark, ancient and dark.  
Its mouth is stopped with bramble, thorn, and briar;  
And no one scrambles over the sliding chalk  
By beech and yew and perishing juniper  
Down the half precipices of its sides, with roots  
And rabbit holes for steps. The sun of Winter,  
The moon of Summer, and all the singing birds  
Except the missel-thrush that loves juniper,



Are quite shut out. But far more ancient and dark  
The Combe looks since they killed the badger there,  
Dug him out and gave him to the hounds,  
That most ancient Briton of English beasts.

## JAMES ELROY FLECKER

1884-1915

### THE DYING PATRIOT

DAY breaks on England down the Kentish hills,  
Singing in the silence of the meadow-footing rills,  
Day of my dreams, O day!

I saw them march from Dover, long ago,  
With a silver cross before them, singing low,  
Monks of Rome from their home where the blue seas  
break in foam,  
Augustine with his feet of snow.

Noon strikes on England, noon on Oxford town,  
—Beauty she was statue cold—there's blood upon  
her gown:

Noon of my dreams, O noon!

Proud and godly kings had built her, long ago,  
With her towers and tombs and statues all arow,  
With her fair and floral air and the love that lingers  
there  
And the streets where the great men go.

Evening on the olden, the golden sea of Wales,  
When the first star shivers and the last wave pales:  
O evening dreams!

There's a house that Britons walked in, long ago,  
Where now the springs of ocean fall and flow,  
And the dead robed in red and sea-lilies overhead  
Sway when the long winds blow.



Sleep not, my country: though night is here, afar  
Your children of the morning are clamorous for war:  
Fire in the night, O dreams!

Though she send you as she sent you, long ago,  
South to desert, east to ocean, west to snow,  
West of these out to seas colder than the Hebrides  
I must go

Where the fleet of stars is anchored and the young  
Star-captains glow.

## RUPERT BROOKE

1887-1915

## HEAVEN

FISH (fly-replete, in depth of June,  
Dawdling away their wat'ry noon)  
Ponder deep wisdom, dark or clear,  
Each secret fishy hope or fear.  
Fish say, they have their Stream and Pond;  
But is there anything Beyond?  
This life cannot be All, they swear,  
For how unpleasant, if it were!  
One may not doubt that, somehow, Good  
Shall come of Water and of Mud:  
And, sure, the reverent eye must see  
A Purpose in Liquidity.  
We darkly know, by Faith we cry,  
The future is not Wholly Dry.  
Mud unto mud!—Death eddies near—  
Not here the appointed End, not here!  
But somewhere, beyond Space and Time,  
Is wetter water, slimier slime!  
And there (they trust) there swimmeth One  
Who swam ere rivers were begun,

Immense, of fishy form and mind,  
Squamous, omnipotent, and kind;  
And under that Almighty Fin,  
The littlest fish may enter in.  
Oh! never fly conceals a hook,  
Fish say, in the Eternal Brook,  
But more than mundane weeds are there,  
And mud, celestially fair;  
Fat caterpillars drift around,  
And Paradisal grubs are found;  
Unfading moths, immortal flies,  
And the worm that never dies.  
And in that Heaven of all their wish,  
There shall be no more land, say fish.

### THE SOLDIER

IF I should die, think only this of me:  
That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is for ever England. There shall be  
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;  
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,  
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to  
    roam,  
A body of England's, breathing English air,  
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.  
And think, this heart, all evil shed away,  
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less  
    Gives somewhere back the thoughts by  
    England given;  
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;  
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,  
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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, OXFORD  
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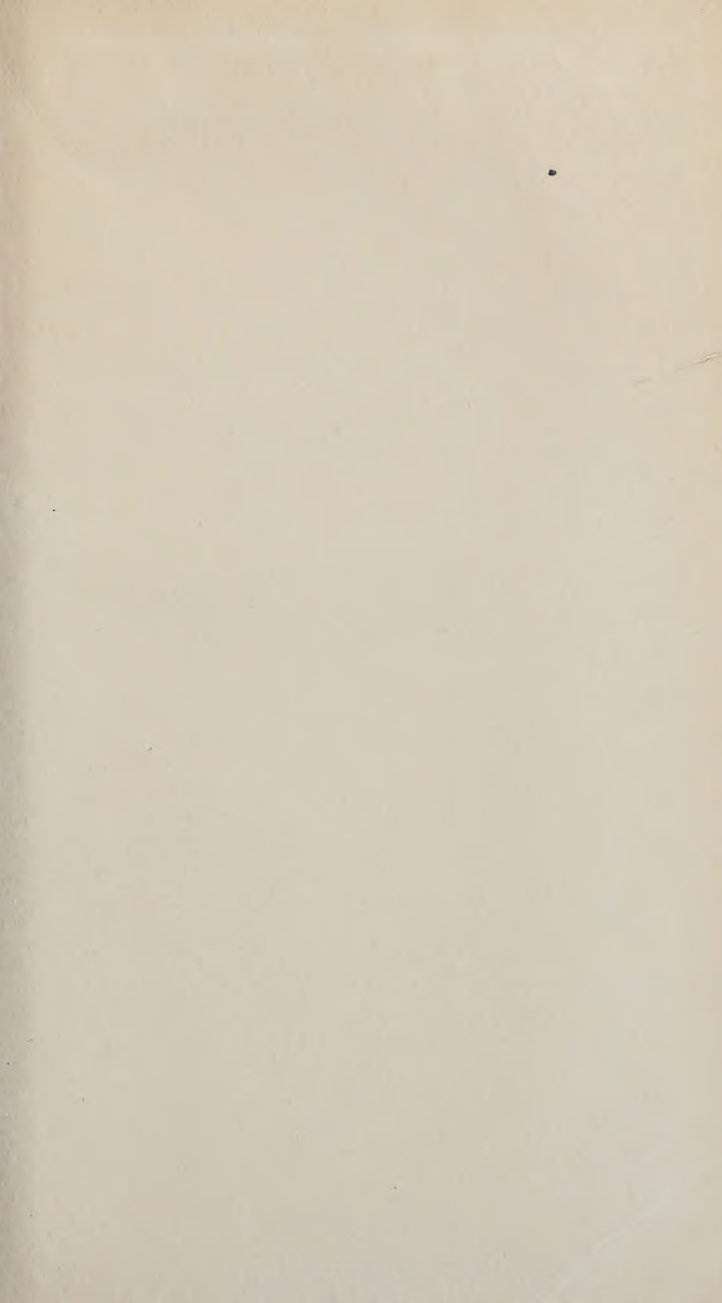
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*July 1931.*



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